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P O E M S .





# POEMS

BY

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

SECOND SERIES.

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TO  
THE EVER FRESH AND HAPPY MEMORY  
OF  
OUR LITTLE BLANCHE,  
THIS VOLUME  
IS REVERENTLY DEDICATED.

TO M. W. L.



I THOUGHT our love at full, but I did err ;  
Joy's wreath drooped o'er mine eyes ; I could not see  
That sorrow in our happy world must be  
Love's deepest spokesman and interpreter ;  
But, as a mother feels her child first stir  
Under her heart, so felt I instantly  
Deep in my soul another bond to thee  
Thrill with that life we saw depart from her :  
O mother of our angel-child ! twice-dear !  
Death knits as well as parts, and still, I wis,  
Her tender radiance shall enfold us here,  
Even as the light, borne up by inward bliss,  
Threads the void glooms of space without a fear,  
To print on farthest stars her pitying kiss.

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\*.\* The poem called "The Morning-Glory," on page 131, it is proper to state, is by another hand.

P O E M S.





## P O E M S.



### COLUMBUS.



THE cordage creaks and rattles in the wind,  
With freaks of sudden hush ; the reeling sea  
Now thumps like solid rock beneath the stern,  
Now leaps with clumsy wrath, strikes short, and, falling  
Crumbled to whispery foam, slips rustling down  
The broad backs of the waves, which jostle and crowd  
To fling themselves upon that unknown shore,  
Their used familiar since the dawn of time,  
Whither this foredoomed life — an eminent surge  
Chance-heaped a breath's space o'er the weltering press,

With deeper grip clutching the tide's green mane  
And later-weaned from the mid-ocean's breast,  
Yet not less frail than the individual shape  
By vanishing water worn — is guided on  
To sway on triumph's hushed, aspiring poise  
One glittering moment, then to break fulfilled.

How lonely is the sea's perpetual swing,  
The melancholy wash of endless waves,  
The sigh of some grim monster undescried,  
Fear-painted on the canvas of the dark,  
Shifting on his uneasy pillow of brine !  
Yet night brings more companions than the day  
To this drear waste ; new constellations burn,  
And fairer stars, with whose calm height my soul  
Finds nearer sympathy than with my herd  
Of earthen souls, whose vision's scanty ring  
Makes me its prisoner to beat my wings  
Against the cold bars of their unbelief,  
Knowing in vain my own free heaven beyond.  
O God ! this world, so crammed with eager life  
That comes and goes and wanders back to silence

Like the idle wind, which yet man's shaping mind  
Can make his drudge to swell the longing sails  
Of highest endeavour, — this mad, unthrift world,  
Which, every hour, throws life enough away  
To make her deserts kind and hospitable,  
Lets her great destinies be waved aside  
By smooth, lip-reverent, formal infidels,  
Who weigh the God they not believe with gold,  
And find no spot in Judas, save that he,  
Driving a duller bargain than he ought,  
Saddled his guild with too cheap precedent.  
O Faith! if thou art strong, thine opposite  
Is mighty also, and the dull fool's sneer  
Hath ofttimes shot chill palsy through the arm  
Just lifted to achieve its crowning deed,  
And made the firm-based heart, that would have quailed  
The rack or fagot, shudder like a leaf  
Wrinkled with frost and loose upon its stem.  
The wicked and the weak, by some dark law,  
Have a strange power to shut and rivet down  
Their own horizon round us, to unwing  
Our heaven-aspiring visions, and to blur

With surly clouds the Future's gleaming peaks,  
Far seen across the brine of thankless years.  
If the chosen soul could never be alone  
In deep mid-silence, open-doored to God,  
No greatness ever had been dreamed or done ;  
Among dull hearts a prophet never grew ;  
The nurse of full-grown souls is solitude.

The old world is effete ; there man with man  
Jostles, and, in the brawl for means to live,  
Life is trod under foot, — Life, the one block  
Of marble that 's vouchsafed wherefrom to carve  
Our great thoughts, white and godlike, to shine down  
The future, Life, the irredeemable block,  
Which one o'er-hasty chisel-dint oft mars,  
Scanting our room to cut the features out  
Of our full hope, so forcing us to crown  
With a mean head the perfect limbs, or leave  
The god's face glowing o'er a satyr's trunk,  
Failure's brief epitaph.

Yes, Europe's world  
Reels on to judgment ; there the common need,

Losing God's sacred use, to be a bond  
'Twixt Me and Thee, sets each one scowlingly  
O'er his own selfish hoard at bay ; no state,  
Knit strongly with eternal fibres up  
Of all men's separate and united weals,  
Self-poised and sole as stars, yet one as light,  
Holds up a shape of large Humanity  
To which by natural instinct every man  
Pays loyalty exulting, by which all  
Mould their own lives, and feel their pulses filled  
With the red fiery blood of the general life,  
Making them mighty in peace, as now in war  
They are, even in the flush of victory, weak,  
Conquering that manhood which should them subdue.  
And what gift bring I to this untried world ?  
Shall the same tragedy be played anew,  
And the same lurid curtain drop at last  
On one dread desolation, one fierce crash  
Of that recoil which on its makers God  
Lets Ignorance and Sin and Hunger make,  
Early or late ? Or shall that commonwealth  
Whose potent unity and concentric force

Can draw these scattered joints and parts of men  
Into a whole ideal man once more,  
Which sucks not from its limbs the life away,  
But sends it flood-tide and creates itself  
Over again in every citizen,  
Be there built up ? For me, I have no choice ;  
I might turn back to other destinies,  
For one sincere key opes all Fortune's doors ;  
But whoso answers not God's earliest call  
Forfeits or dulls that faculty supreme  
Of lying open to his genius  
Which makes the wise heart certain of its ends.

Here am I ; for what end God knows, not I ;  
Westward still points the inexorable soul ;  
Here am I, with no friend but the sad sea,  
The beating heart of this great enterprise,  
Which, without me, would stiffen in swift death ;  
This have I mused on, since mine eye could first  
Among the stars distinguish and with joy  
Rest on that God-fed Pharos of the north,  
On some blue promontory of heaven lighted

That juts far out into the upper sea ;  
To this one hope my heart hath clung for years,  
As would a foundling to the talisman  
Hung round his neck by hands he knew not whose,  
A poor, vile thing and dross to all beside,  
Yet he therein can feel a virtue left  
By the sad pressure of a mother's hand,  
And unto him it still is tremulous  
With palpitating haste and wet with tears,  
The key to him of hope and humanness,  
The coarse shell of life's pearl, Expectancy.  
This hope hath been to me for love and fame,  
Hath made me wholly lonely on the earth,  
Building me up as in a thick-ribbed tower,  
Wherewith enwalled my watching spirit burned,  
Conquering its little island from the Dark,  
Sole as a scholar's lamp, and heard men's steps,  
In the far hurry of the outward world,  
Pass dimly forth and back, sounds heard in dream.  
As Ganymede by the eagle was snatched up  
From the gross sod to be Jove's cupbearer,  
So was I lifted by my great design :

And who hath trod Olympus, from his eye  
Fades not that broader outlook of the gods ;  
His life's low valleys overbrow earth's clouds,  
And that Olympian spectre of the past  
Looms towering up in sovereign memory,  
Beckoning his soul from meaner heights of doom.  
Had but the shadow of the Thunderer's bird,  
Flashing athwart my spirit, made of me  
A swift-betraying vision's Ganymede,  
Yet to have greatly dreamed precludes low ends ;  
Great days have ever such a morning-red,  
On such a base great futures are built up,  
And aspiration, though not put in act,  
Comes back to ask its plighted troth again,  
Still watches round its grave the unlaid ghost  
Of a dead virtue, and makes other hopes,  
Save that implacable one, seem thin and bleak  
As shadows of bare trees upon the snow,  
Bound freezing there by the unpitying moon.

While other youths perplexed their mandolins,  
Praying that Thetis would her fingers twine



In the loose glories of her lover's hair,  
And wile another kiss to keep back day,  
I, stretched beneath the many-centuried shade  
Of some writhed oak, the wood's Laocoön,  
Did of my hope a dryad mistress make,  
Whom I would woo to meet me privily,  
Or underneath the stars, or when the moon  
Flecked all the forest floor with scattered pearls.  
O days whose memory tames to fawning down  
The surly fell of Ocean's bristled neck !

I know not when this hope enthralled me first,  
But from my boyhood up I loved to hear  
The tall pine-forests of the Apennine  
Murmur their hoary legends of the sea,  
Which hearing, I in vision clear beheld  
The sudden dark of tropic night shut down  
O'er the huge whisper of great watery wastes,  
The while a pair of herons trailingy  
Flapped inland, where some league-wide river hurled  
The yellow spoil of unconjectured realms  
Far through a gulf's green silence, never scarred

By any but the Northwind's hurrying keels.  
And not the pines alone ; all sights and sounds  
To my world-seeking heart paid fealty,  
And catered for it as the Cretan bees  
Brought honey to the baby Jupiter,  
Who in his soft hand crushed a violet,  
Godlike foremusing the rough thunder's gripe ;  
Then did I entertain the poet's song,  
My great Idea's guest, and, passing o'er  
That iron bridge the Tuscan built to hell,  
I heard Ulysses tell of mountain-chains  
Whose adamantine links, his manacles,  
The western main shook growling, and still gnawed ;  
I brooded on the wise Athenian's tale  
Of happy Atlantis, and heard Björne's keel  
Crunch the gray pebbles of the Vinland shore :  
For I believed the poets ; it is they  
Who utter wisdom from the central deep,  
And, listening to the inner flow of things,  
Speak to the age out of eternity.

Ah me ! old hermits sought for solitude

In caves and desert places of the earth,  
Where their own heart-beat was the only stir  
Of living thing that comforted the year ;  
But the bald pillar-top of Simeon,  
In midnight's blankest waste, were populous,  
Matched with the isolation drear and deep  
Of him who pines among the swarm of men,  
At once a new thought's king and prisoner,  
Feeling the truer life within his life,  
The fountain of his spirit's prophecy,  
Sinking away and wasting, drop by drop,  
In the ungrateful sands of skeptic ears.  
He in the palace-aisles of untrod woods  
Doth walk a king ; for him the pent-up cell  
Widens beyond the circles of the stars,  
And all the sceptred spirits of the past  
Come thronging in to greet him as their peer,  
While, like an heir new-crowned, his heart o'erleaps  
The blazing steps of his ancestral throne ;  
But in the market-place's glare and throng  
He sits apart, an exile, and his brow  
Aches with the mocking memory of its crown.

But to the spirit select there is no choice ;  
He cannot say, This will I do, or that,  
For the cheap means putting Heaven's ends in pawn,  
And bartering his bleak rocks, the freehold stern  
Of destiny's first-born, for smoother fields  
That yield no crop of self-denying will ;  
A hand is stretched to him from out the dark,  
Which grasping without question, he is led  
Where there is work that he must do for God.  
The trial still is the strength's complement,  
And the uncertain, dizzy path that scales  
The sheer heights of supremest purposes  
Is steeper to the angel than the child.  
Chances have laws as fixed as planets have,  
And disappointment's dry and bitter root,  
Envy's harsh berries, and the choking pool  
Of the world's scorn, are the right mother-milk  
To the tough hearts that pioneer their kind,  
And break a pathway to those unknown realms  
That in the earth's broad shadow lie enthralled ;  
Endurance is the crowning quality,  
And patience all the passion of great hearts ;

These are their stay, and when the leaden world  
Sets its hard face against their fateful thought,  
And brute strength, like a scornful conqueror,  
Clangs his huge mace down in the other scale,  
The inspired soul but flings his patience in,  
And slowly that outweighs the ponderous globe, —  
One faith against a whole earth's unbelief,  
One soul against the flesh of all mankind.

Thus ever seems it when my soul can hear  
The voice that errs not ; then my triumph gleams,  
O'er the blank ocean beckoning, and all night  
My heart flies on before me as I sail ;  
Far on I see my lifelong enterprise,  
Which rose like Ganges 'mid the freezing snows  
Of a world's sordidness, sweep broadening down,  
And, gathering to itself a thousand streams,  
Grow sacred ere it mingle with the sea ;  
I see the ungated wall of chaos old,  
With blocks Cyclopean hewn of solid night,  
Fade like a wreath of unreturning mist  
Before the irreversible feet of light ; —

And lo, with what clear omen in the east  
On day's gray threshold stands the eager dawn,  
Like young Leander rosy from the sea  
Glowing at Hero's lattice !

One day more

These muttering shoalbrains leave the helm to me :  
God, let me not in their dull ooze be stranded ;  
Let not this one frail bark, to hollow which  
I have dug out the pith and sinewy heart  
Of my aspiring life's fair trunk, be so  
Cast up to warp and blacken in the sun,  
Just as the opposing wind 'gins whistle off  
His check-swollen mates, and from the leaning mast  
Fortune's full sail strains forward !

One poor day ! —

Remember whose and not how short it is !  
It is God's day, it is Columbus's.  
A lavish day ! One day, with life and heart,  
Is more than time enough to find a world.

1844.

## AN INCIDENT OF THE FIRE AT HAMBURG.



THE tower of old Saint Nicholas soared upward to the  
skies,

Like some huge piece of Nature's make, the growth  
of centuries ;

You could not deem its crowding spires a work of  
human art,

They seemed to struggle lightward from a sturdy living  
heart.

Not Nature's self more freely speaks in crystal or in  
oak,

Than, through the pious builder's hand, in that gray pile  
she spoke ;

And as from acorn springs the oak, so, freely and  
alone,  
Sprang from his heart this hymn to God, sung in obedi-  
ent stone.

It seemed a wondrous freak of chance, so perfect, yet  
so rough,  
A whim of Nature crystallized slowly in granite  
tough ;  
The thick spires yearned towards the sky in quaint,  
harmonious lines,  
And in broad sunlight basked and slept, like a grove of  
blasted pines.

Never did rock or stream or tree lay claim with better  
right  
To all the adorning sympathies of shadow and of  
light ;  
And, in that forest petrified, as forester there  
dwells  
Stout Herman, the old sacristan, sole lord of all its  
bells.



Surge leaping after surge, the fire roared onward red  
as blood,

Till half of Hamburg lay engulfed beneath the eddy  
flood ;

For miles away, the fiery spray poured down its deadly  
rain,

And back and forth the billows sucked, and paused, and  
burst again.

From square to square with tiger leaps rushed on the  
lustful fire,

The air to leeward shuddered with the gasps of its de-  
sire ;

And church and palace, which even now stood whelmed  
but to the knee,

Lift their black roofs like breakers lone amid the whirl-  
ing sea.

Up in his tower old Herman sat and watched with quiet  
look ;

His soul had trusted God too long to be at last for-  
sook ;

He could not fear, for surely God a pathway would unfold

Through this red sea for faithful hearts, as once he did of old.

But scarcely can he cross himself, or on his good saint call,

Before the sacrilegious flood o'erleaped the church-yard wall ;

And, ere a *pater* half was said, 'mid smoke and crackling glare,

His island tower scarce juts its head above the wide despair.

Upon the peril's desperate peak his heart stood up sublime ;

His first thought was for God above, his next was for his chime ;

"Sing now and make your voices heard in hymns of praise," cried he,

"As did the Israelites of old, safe walking through the sea !

“ Through this red sea our God hath made the pathway  
safe to shore ;

Our promised land stands full in sight ; shout now as  
ne’er before ! ”

And as the tower came crushing down, the bells, in  
clear accord,

Pealed forth the grand old German hymn, — “ All good  
souls, praise the Lord ! ”

## THE EPITAPH.



WHAT means this glozing epitaph,  
Unless its errand be to shame,  
As with a mocking devil's laugh,  
The frail delusion of that fame  
Which but embalms an empty name?

As columns, when the roof is gone  
Which they were reared to hold on high,  
Are merely idle shafts of stone,  
Which, forced to tell an endless lie,  
Do but deride the passer-by ;—

So stand these legends in Death's halls ;

Vain figures on a dial-plate

Whereon no gnomon's shadow falls ;

Poor inch-deep characters, that prate

Of empire over Time and Fate.

When eye, and tongue, and heart are null,

What profits then the laurel wreath,

Twined loathsome round a grinning skull ?

Food crammed between a corpse's teeth

To win a deeper sneer from Death !

O high Ambition ! can there be

No epitaph in league with Time ?

Is life a ship's track in the sea ?

Are all these hopes and aims sublime

Mere architecture of frail rime ?

Doth God implant for worse than naught

This huge desire of memory ?

Cannot some monument be wrought,

Which from its moveless height shall see

The Pyramids' last obsequy ?

To be a glimpse of summer sent  
    Into the bleak hearts of the poor ;  
To make God's sunshine evident,  
    By opening Eden's humble door  
    To souls where darkness reigned before ;

To make this cloudy life a part  
    Of the eternal grace beyond ;  
To forge the vague dreams of the heart  
    Into a mighty sceptre-wand  
    Whose touch makes freemen of the bond ; —

Methinks a life thus spent should rear  
    A monument in Fate's despite,  
Whose epitaph would grow more clear  
    As Truth's sun rose and scattered light,  
    Full and more full, from Heaven's glad height.

Let it be graven on my tomb : —  
    “ He came and left more smiles behind,  
One ray he shot athwart the gloom,  
    He helped one fetter to unbind,  
    Men think of him and grow more kind.”

1844.

## HUNGER AND COLD.



SISTERS two, all praise to you,  
With your faces pinched and blue ;  
To the poor man you 've been true  
    From of old :  
You can speak the keenest word,  
You are sure of being heard,  
From the point you 're never stirred,  
    Hunger and Cold !

Let sleek statesmen temporize ;  
Palsied are their shifts and lies  
When they meet your bloodshot eyes,  
    Grim and bold ;

Policy you set at naught,  
In their traps you 'll not be caught,  
You 're too honest to be bought,  
Hunger and Cold!

Bolt and bar the palace-door ;  
While the mass of men are poor,  
Naked truth grows more and more  
Uncontrolled ;  
You had never yet, I guess,  
Any praise for bashfulness,  
You can visit sans court-dress,  
Hunger and Cold !

While the music fell and rose,  
And the dance reeled to its close,  
Where her round of costly woes  
Fashion strolled,  
I beheld with shuddering fear  
Wolves' eyes through the windows peer ;  
Little dream they you are near,  
Hunger and Cold !



When the toiler's heart you clutch,  
Conscience is not valued much,  
He reck's not a bloody smutch  
On his gold :

Every thing to you defers,  
You are potent reasoners,  
At your whisper Treason stirs,  
Hunger and Cold !

Rude comparisons you draw,  
Words refuse to sate your maw,  
Your gaunt limbs the cobweb law  
Cannot hold :  
You 're not clogged with foolish pride,  
But can seize a right denied ;  
Somehow God is on your side,  
Hunger and Cold !

You respect no hoary wrong  
More for having triumphed long ;  
Its past victims, haggard throng,  
From the mould

You unbury : swords and spears  
Weaker are than poor men's tears,  
Weaker than your silent years,  
Hunger and Cold !

Let them guard both hall and bower ;  
Through the window you will glower,  
Patient till your reckoning hour  
Shall be tolled :

Cheeks are pale, but hands are red,  
Guiltless blood may chance be shed,  
But ye must and will be fed,  
Hunger and Cold !

God has plans man must not spoil,  
Some were made to starve and toil,  
Some to share the wine and oil,  
We are told :

Devil's theories are these,  
Stifling hope and love and peace,  
Framed your hideous lusts to please,  
Hunger and Cold !

Scatter ashes on thy head,  
Tears of burning sorrow shed,  
Earth ! and be by Pity led  
    To Love's fold ;  
Ere they block the very door  
With lean corpses of the poor,  
And will hush for naught but gore, —  
    Hunger and Cold !

1844.

## THE LANDLORD.



WHAT boot your houses and your lands ?  
In spite of close-drawn deed and fence,  
Like water, 'twixt your cheated hands,  
They slip into the graveyard's sands  
And mock your ownership's pretence.

How shall you speak to urge your right,  
Choked with that soil for which you lust ?  
The bit of clay, for whose delight  
You grasp, is mortgaged, too ; Death might  
Foreclose this very day in dust.

Fence as you please, this plain poor man,  
Whose only fields are in his wit,  
Who shapes the world, as best he can,  
According to God's higher plan,  
Owns you, and fences as is fit.

Though yours the rents, his incomes wax  
By right of eminent domain ;  
From factory tall to woodman's axe,  
All things on earth must pay their tax,  
To feed his hungry heart and brain.

He takes you from your easy-chair,  
And what he plans, that you must do ;  
You sleep in down, eat dainty fare, —  
He mounts his crazy garret-stair  
And starves, the landlord over you.

Feeding the clods your idlesse drains,  
You make more green six feet of soil ;  
His fruitful word, like suns and rains,  
Partakes the seasons' bounteous pains,  
And toils to lighten human toil.

Your lands, with force or cunning got,  
Shrink to the measure of the grave ;  
But Death himself abridges not  
The tenures of almighty thought,  
The titles of the wise and brave.

.

## TO A PINE-TREE.



FAR up on Katahdin thou towerest,  
Purple-blue with the distance and vast ;  
Like a cloud o'er the lowlands thou lowerest,  
That hangs poised on a lull in the blast,  
To its fall leaning awful.

In the storm, like a prophet o'ermaddened,  
Thou singest and tossest thy branches ;  
Thy heart with the terror is gladdened,  
Thou forebodest the dread avalanches,  
When whole mountains swoop valeward.

In the calm thou o'erstretchest the valleys  
With thine arms, as if blessings imploring,  
Like an old king led forth from his palace,  
When his people to battle are pouring  
From the city beneath him.

To the lumberer asleep 'neath thy booming  
Thou dost sing of wild billows in motion,  
Till he longs to be swung 'mid their booming  
In the tents of the Arabs of ocean,  
Whose finned isles are their cattle.

For the gale snatches thee for his lyre,  
With mad hand crashing melody frantic,  
While he pours forth his mighty desire  
To leap down on the eager Atlantic,  
Whose arms stretch to his playmate.

The wild storm makes his lair in thy branches,  
And thence preys on the continent under ;  
Like a lion, crouched close on his haunches,  
There awaiteth his leap the fierce thunder,  
Growling low with impatience.



Spite of winter, thou keep'st thy green glory,  
Lusty father of Titans past number !  
The snow-flakes alone make thee hoary,  
Nestling close to thy branches in slumber,  
And thee mantling with silence.

Thou alone know'st the splendor of winter,  
'Mid thy snow-silvered, hushed precipices,  
Hearing crags of green ice groan and splinter,  
And then plunge down the muffled abysses  
In the quiet of midnight.

Thou alone know'st the glory of summer,  
Gazing down on thy broad seas of forest,  
On thy subjects, that send a proud murmur  
Up to thee, to their sachem, who towerest  
From thy bleak throne to heaven.

## SI DESCENDERO IN INFERNUM, ADES.



O, WANDERING dim on the extremest edge  
Of God's bright providence, whose spirits sigh  
Drearly in you, like the winter sedge  
That shivers o'er the dead pool stiff and dry,  
A thin, sad voice, when the bold wind roars by  
From the clear North of Duty, —  
Still by cracked arch and broken shaft I trace  
That here was once a shrine and holy place  
Of the supernal Beauty, —  
A child's play-altar reared of stones and moss,  
With wilted flowers for offering laid across,  
Mute recognition of the all-ruling Grace.

How far are ye from the innocent, from those  
Whose hearts are as a little lane serene,  
Smooth-heaped from wall to wall with unbroke snows,  
Or in the summer blithe with lamb-cropped green,  
Save the one track, where naught more rude is seen  
Than the plump wain at even  
Bringing home four months' sunshine bound in sheaves!—  
How far are ye from those! yet who believes  
That ye can shut out heaven?  
Your souls partake its influence, not in vain  
Nor all unconscious, as that silent lane  
Its drift of noiseless apple-blooms receives.

Looking within myself, I note how thin  
A plank of station, chance, or prosperous fate  
Doth fence me from the clutching waves of sin;—  
In my own heart I find the worst man's mate,  
And see not dimly the smooth-hinged gate  
That opes to those abysses  
Where ye grope darkly, — ye who never knew  
On your young hearts love's consecrating dew,  
Or felt a mother's kisses,

Or home's restraining tendrils round you curled ;  
Ah, side by side with heart's-ease in this world  
The fatal nightshade grows and bitter rue !

One band ye cannot break, — the force that clips  
And grasps your circles to the central light ;  
Yours is the prodigal comet's long ellipse,  
Self-exiled to the farthest verge of night ;  
Yet strives with you no less that inward might

No sin hath e'er imbruted ;  
The god in you the creed-dimmed eye eludes ;  
The Law brooks not to have its solitudes

By bigot feet polluted ; —  
Yet they who watch your God-compelled return  
May see your happy perihelion burn  
Where the calm sun his unfledged planets broods.

## TO THE PAST.



WONDROUS and awful are thy silent halls,

O kingdom of the past !

There lie the bygone ages in their palls,

Guarded by shadows vast, —

There all is hushed and breathless,

Save when some image of old error falls

Earth worshipped once as deathless.

There sits drear Egypt, 'mid beleaguering sands,

Half woman and half beast,

The burnt-out torch within her mouldering hands

That once lit all the East ;

A dotard bleared and hoary,  
There Asser crouches o'er the blackened brands  
Of Asia's long-quenched glory.

Still as a city buried 'neath the sea  
Thy courts and temples stand ;  
Idle as forms on wind-waved tapestry  
Of saints and heroes grand,  
Thy phantasms grope and shiver,  
Or watch the loose shores crumbling silently  
Into Time's gnawing river.

Titanic shapes with faces blank and dun,  
Of their old godhead lorn,  
Gaze on the embers of the sunken sun,  
Which they misdeem for morn ;  
And yet the eternal sorrow  
In their unmonarched eyes says day is done  
Without the hope of morrow.

O realm of silence and of swart eclipse,  
The shapes that haunt thy gloom

Make signs to us and move their withered lips  
    Across the gulf of doom ;  
Yet all their sound and motion  
Bring no more freight to us than wraiths of ships  
    On the mirage's ocean.

And if sometimes a moaning wandereth  
    From out thy desolate halls,  
If some grim shadow of thy living death  
    Across our sunshine falls  
And scares the world to error,  
The eternal life sends forth melodious breath  
    To chase the misty terror.

Thy mighty clamors, wars, and world-noised deeds  
    Are silent now in dust,  
Gone like a tremble of the huddling reeds  
    Beneath some sudden gust ;  
Thy forms and creeds have vanished,  
Tossed out to wither like unsightly weeds  
    From the world's garden banished.

Whatever of true life there was in thee  
    Leaps in our age's veins ;  
Wield still thy bent and wrinkled empery,  
    And shake thine idle chains ;—  
To thee thy dross is clinging,  
For us thy martyrs die, thy prophets see,  
Thy poets still are singing.

Here, 'mid the bleak waves of our strife and care,  
    Float the green Fortunate Isles  
Where all thy hero-spirits dwell, and share  
    Our martyrdoms and toils ;  
The present moves attended  
With all of brave and excellent and fair  
That made the old time splendid.



## TO THE FUTURE.



O LAND of Promise ! from what Pisgah's height  
Can I behold thy stretch of peaceful bowers,  
Thy golden harvests flowing out of sight,  
Thy nestled homes and sun-illumined towers ?  
Gazing upon the sunset's high-heaped gold,  
Its crags of opal and of chrysolite,  
Its deeps on deeps of glory, that unfold  
Still brightening abysses,  
And blazing precipices,  
Whence but a scanty leap it seems to heaven,  
Sometimes a glimpse is given  
Of thy more gorgeous realm, thy more unstinted blisses.

O Land of Quiet ! to thy shore the surf  
Of the perturbed Present rolls and sleeps ;  
Our storms breathe soft as June upon thy turf  
And lure out blossoms ; to thy bosom leaps,  
As to a mother's, the o'erwearied heart,  
Hearing far off and dim the toiling mart,  
The hurrying feet, the curses without number,  
And, circled with the glow Elysian  
Of thine exulting vision,  
Out of its very cares woos charms for peace and slumber.

To thee the Earth lifts up her fettered hands  
And cries for vengeance ; with a pitying smile  
Thou blestest her, and she forgets her bands,  
And her old woe-worn face a little while  
Grows young and noble ; unto thee the Oppressor  
Looks, and is dumb with awe ;  
The eternal law,  
Which makes the crime its own blindfold redresser,  
Shadows his heart with perilous foreboding,  
And he can see the grim-eyed Doom  
From out the trembling gloom  
Its silent-footed steeds toward his palace goading.

What promises hast thou for Poets' eyes,  
Aweary of the turmoil and the wrong !  
To all their hopes what overjoyed replies !  
What undreamed ecstasies for blissful song !  
Thy happy plains no war-trump's brawling clangor  
Disturbs, and fools the poor to hate the poor ;  
The humble glares not on the high with anger ;  
Love leaves no grudge at less, no greed for more ;  
In vain strives Self the godlike sense to smother ;  
From the soul's deeps  
It throbs and leaps ;  
The noble 'neath foul rags beholds his long-lost brother.

To thee the Martyr looketh, and his fires  
Unlock their fangs and leave his spirit free ;  
To thee the Poet 'mid his toil aspires,  
And grief and hunger climb about his knee,  
Welcome as children ; thou upholdest  
The lone Inventor by his demon haunted ;  
The Prophet cries to thee when hearts are coldest,  
And, gazing o'er the midnight's bleak abyss,  
Sees the drowsed soul awaken at thy kiss,  
And stretch its happy arms and leap up disenchanted.

Thou bringest vengeance, but so loving-kindly  
The guilty thinks it pity ; taught by thee,  
Fierce tyrants drop the scourges wherewith blindly  
Their own souls they were scarring ; conquerors  
see  
With horror in their hands the accursed spear  
That tore the meek One's side on Calvary,  
And from their trophies shrink with ghastly fear ;  
Thou, too, art the Forgiver,  
The beauty of man's soul to man revealing ;  
The arrows from thy quiver  
Pierce error's guilty heart, but only pierce for healing.

O, whither, whither, glory-winged dreams,  
From out Life's sweat and turmoil would ye bear  
me?  
Shut, gates of Fancy, on your golden gleams, —  
This agony of hopeless contrast spare me !  
Fade, cheating glow, and leave me to my night !  
He is a coward, who would borrow  
A charm against the present sorrow  
From the vague Future's promise of delight :

As life's alarums nearer roll,  
The ancestral buckler calls,  
Self-clanging, from the walls  
In the high temple of the soul ;  
Where are most sorrows, there the poet's sphere is,  
To feed the soul with patience,  
To heal its desolations  
With words of unshorn truth, with love that never  
wearies.

## HEBE.



I SAW the twinkle of white feet,  
I saw the flash of robes descending ;  
Before her ran an influence fleet,  
That bowed my heart like barley bending.

As, in bare fields, the searching bees  
Pilot to blooms beyond our finding,  
It led me on, by sweet degrees  
Joy's simple honey-cells unbinding.

Those Graces were that seemed grim Fates ;  
With nearer love the sky leaned o'er me ;  
The long-sought Secret's golden gates  
On musical hinges swung before me.

I saw the brimmed bowl in her grasp  
Thrilling with godhood ; like a lover  
I sprang the proffered life to clasp ; —  
The beaker fell ; the luck was over.

The Earth has drunk the vintage up ;  
What boots it patch the goblet's splinters ?  
Can Summer fill the icy cup,  
Whose treacherous crystal is but Winter's ?

O spendthrift Haste ! await the Gods ;  
Their nectar crowns the lips of Patience ;  
Haste scatters on unthankful sods  
The immortal gift in vain libations.

Coy Hebe flies from those that woo,  
And shuns the hands would seize upon her ;  
Follow thy life, and she will sue  
To pour for thee the cup of honor.

## THE SEARCH.



I WENT to seek for Christ,  
And Nature seemed so fair  
That first the woods and fields my youth enticed,  
And I was sure to find him there :  
The temple I forsook,  
And to the solitude  
Allegiance paid ; but Winter came and shook  
The crown and purple from my wood ;  
His snows, like desert sands, with scornful drift,  
Besieged the columned aisle and palace-gate ;  
My Thebes, cut deep with many a solemn rift,  
But epitaphed her own sepulchred state :  
Then I remembered whom I went to seek,  
And blessed blunt Winter for his council bleak.



Back to the world I turned,

For Christ, I said, is King ;

So the cramped alley and the hut I spurned,

As far beneath his sojourning :

'Mid power and wealth I sought,

But found no trace of him,

And all the costly offerings I had brought

With sudden rust and mould grew dim :

I found his tomb, indeed, where, by their laws,

All must on stated days themselves imprison,

Mocking with bread a dead creed's grinning jaws,

Witless how long the life had thence arisen ;

Due sacrifice to this they set apart,

Prizing it more than Christ's own living heart.

So from my feet the dust

Of the proud World I shook ;

Then came dear Love and shared with me his crust,

And half my sorrow's burden took.

After the World's soft bed,

Its rich and dainty fare,

Like down seemed Love's coarse pillow to my head,

His cheap food seemed as manna rare ;

Fresh-trodden prints of bare and bleeding feet,  
Turned to the heedless city whence I came,  
Hard by I saw, and springs of worship sweet  
Gushed from my cleft heart smitten by the same ;  
Love looked me in the face and spake no words,  
But straight I knew those foot-prints were the Lord's.

I followed where they led,  
And in a hovel rude,  
With naught to fence the weather from his head,  
The King I sought for meekly stood ;  
A naked, hungry child  
Clung round his gracious knee,  
And a poor hunted slave looked up and smiled  
To bless the smile that set him free ;  
New miracles I saw his presence do, —  
No more I knew the hovel bare and poor,  
The gathered chips into a woodpile grew,  
The broken morsel swelled to goodly store ;  
I knelt and wept : my Christ no more I seek,  
His throne is with the outcast and the weak.

## THE PRESENT CRISIS.



WHEN a deed is done for Freedom, through the broad  
earth's aching breast  
Runs a thrill of joy prophetic, trembling on from east  
to west,  
And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels the soul  
within him climb  
To the awful verge of manhood, as the energy sub-  
lime  
Of a century bursts full-blossomed on the thorny stem  
of Time.

Through the walls of hut and palace shoots the instantaneous throe,  
When the travail of the Ages wrings earth's systems to  
and fro ;  
At the birth of each new Era, with a recognizing  
start,  
Nation wildly looks at nation, standing with mute lips  
apart,  
And glad Truth's yet mightier man-child leaps beneath  
the Future's heart.

So the Evil's triumph sendeth, with a terror and a  
chill,  
Under continent to continent, the sense of coming  
ill,  
And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels his sympathies  
with God  
In hot tear-drops ebbing earthward, to be drunk up by  
the sod,  
Till a corpse crawls round unburied, delving in the  
nobler clod.

For mankind are one in spirit, and an instinct bears  
along,

Round the earth's electric circle, the swift flash of right  
or wrong ;

Whether conscious or unconscious, yet Humanity's vast  
frame

Through its ocean-sundered fibres feels the gush of joy  
or shame ; —

In the gain or loss of one race all the rest have equal  
claim.

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to  
decide,

In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or  
evil side ;

Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each  
the bloom or blight,

Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon  
the right,

And the choice goes by for ever 'twixt that darkness  
and that light.

Hast thou chosen, O my people, on whose party thou  
shalt stand,  
Ere the Doom from its worn sandals shakes the dust  
against our land ?  
Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet 't is Truth alone  
is strong,  
And, albeit she wander outcast now, I see around her  
throng  
Troops of beautiful, tall angels, to enshield her from all  
wrong.

Backward look across the ages and the beacon-moments  
see,  
That, like peaks of some sunk continent, jut through  
Oblivion's sea ;  
Not an ear in court or market for the low foreboding  
cry  
Of those Crises, God's stern winnowers, from whose  
feet earth's chaff must fly ;  
Never shows the choice momentous till the judgment  
hath passed by.

Careless seems the great Avenger ; history's pages but  
record

One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems  
and the Word ;

Truth for ever on the scaffold, Wrong for ever on the  
throne, —

Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim  
unknown,

Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above  
his own.

We see dimly in the Present what is small and what is  
great,

Slow of faith how weak an arm may turn the iron helm  
of fate,

But the soul is still oracular ; amid the market's  
din,

List the ominous stern whisper from the Delphic cave  
within, —

“ They enslave their children's children who make com-  
promise with sin.”

Slavery, the earthborn Cyclops, fellest of the giant  
brood,

Sons of brutish Force and Darkness, who have drenched  
the earth with blood,

Famished in his self-made desert, blinded by our purer  
day,

Gropes in yet unblasted regions for his miserable  
prey;—

Shall we guide his gory fingers where our helpless  
children play?

Then to side with Truth is noble when we share her  
wretched crust,

Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 't is prosper-  
ous to be just;

Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward  
stands aside,

Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord is cruci-  
fied,

And the multitude make virtue of the faith they had  
denied.



Count me o'er Earth's chosen heroes, — they were  
souls that stood alone

While the men they agonized for hurled the contume-  
lious stone,

Stood serene and down the future saw the golden beam  
incline

To the side of perfect justice, mastered by their faith  
divine,

By one man's plain truth to manhood and to God's  
supreme design.

By the light of burning heretics Christ's bleeding feet  
I track,

Toiling up new Calvaries ever with the cross that turns  
not back,

And these mounts of anguish number how each genera-  
tion learned

One new word of that grand *Credo* which in prophet-  
hearts hath burned

Since the first man stood God-conquered with his face  
to heaven upturned.

For Humanity sweeps onward : where to-day the mar-  
tyr stands,  
On the morrow crouches Judas with the silver in his  
hands ;  
Far in front the cross stands ready and the crackling  
fagots burn,  
While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe  
return  
To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden  
urn.

'T is as easy to be heroes as to sit the idle  
slaves  
Of a legendary virtue carved upon our fathers'  
graves ;  
Worshippers of light ancestral make the present light  
a crime ;—  
Was the Mayflower launched by cowards, steered by  
men behind their time ?  
Turn those tracks toward Past or Future, that make  
Plymouth rock sublime ?

They were men of present valor, stalwart old iconoclasts,

Unconvinced by axe or gibbet that all virtue was the Past's;

But we make their truth our falsehood, thinking that hath made us free,

Hoarding it in mouldy parchments, while our tender spirits flee

The rude grasp of that great Impulse which drove them across the sea.

They have rights who dare maintain them; we are traitors to our sires,

Smothering in their holy ashes Freedom's new-lit altar-fires;

Shall we make their creed our jailer? Shall we, in our haste to slay,

From the tombs of the old prophets steal the funeral lamps away

To light up the martyr-fagots round the prophets of to-day?

New occasions teach new duties ; Time makes ancient  
good uncouth ;  
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep  
abreast of Truth ;  
Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires ! we ourselves must  
Pilgrims be,  
Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the  
desperate winter sea,  
Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-  
rusted key.

## SUMMER STORM.



UNTREMULOUS in the river clear,  
Toward the sky's image, hangs the imaged bridge ;  
So still the air, that I can hear  
The slender clarion of the unseen midge ;  
Out of the stillness, with a gathering creep,  
Like rising wind in leaves, which now decreases,  
Now lulls, now swells, and all the while increases,  
The huddling trample of a drove of sheep  
Tilts the loose planks, and then as gradually ceases  
In dust on the other side ; life's emblem deep,  
A confused noise between two silences,  
Finding at last in dust precarious peace.

On the wide marsh the purple-blossomed grasses  
Soak up the sunshine ; sleeps the brimming tide,  
Save when the wedge-shaped wake in silence passes  
Of some slow water-rat, whose sinuous glide  
Wavers the long green sedge's shade from side to side ;  
But up the west, like a rock-shivered surge,  
Climbs a great cloud edged with sun-whitened spray ;  
Huge whirls of foam boil toppling o'er its verge,  
And falling still it seems, and yet it climbs away.

Suddenly all the sky is hid  
As with the shutting of a lid,  
One by one great drops are falling  
Doubtful and slow,  
Down the pane they are crookedly crawling,  
And the wind breathes low ;  
Slowly the circles widen on the river,  
Widen and mingle, one and all ;  
Here and there the slenderer flowers shiver,  
Struck by an icy rain-drop's fall.

Now on the hills I hear the thunder mutter,  
The wind is gathering in the west ;

The upturned leaves first whiten and flutter,  
Then droop to a fitful rest ;  
Up from the stream with sluggish flap  
Struggles the gull, and floats away ;  
Nearer and nearer rolls the thunder-clap,—  
We shall not see the sun go down to-day :  
Now leaps the wind on the sleepy marsh,  
And tramples the grass with terrified feet,  
The startled river turns leaden and harsh,  
You can hear the quick heart of the tempest beat.

Look ! look ! that livid flash !  
And instantly follows the rattling thunder,  
As if some cloud-crag, split asunder,  
Fell, splintering with a ruinous crash,  
On the Earth, which crouches in silence under ;  
And now a solid gray wall of rain  
Shuts off the landscape, mile by mile ;  
For a breath's space I see the blue wood again,  
And, ere the next heart-beat, the wind-hurled pile,  
That seemed but now a league aloof,  
Bursts rattling over the sun-parchèd roof ;

Against the windows the storm comes dashing,  
Through tattered foliage the hail tears crashing,  
    The blue lightning flashes,  
    The rapid hail clashes,  
The white waves are tumbling,  
    And, in one baffled roar,  
Like the toothless sea mumbling  
    A rock-bristled shore,  
The thunder is rumbling  
    And crashing and crumbling, —  
Will silence return never more ?

    Hush ! Still as death,  
    The tempest holds his breath  
As from a sudden will ;  
The rain stops short, but from the eaves  
You see it drop, and hear it from the leaves,  
All is so bodingly still ;  
    Again, now, now, again  
Plashes the rain in heavy gout,  
    The crinkled lightning  
Seems ever brightening,



And loud and long  
Again the thunder shouts  
His battle-song, —  
One quivering flash,  
One wildering crash,  
Followed by silence dead and dull,  
As if the cloud, let go,  
Leapt bodily below  
To whelm the earth in one mad overthrow,  
And then a total lull.

Gone, gone, so soon !  
No more my half-crazed fancy there  
Can shape a giant in the air,  
No more I see his streaming hair,  
The writhing portent of his form ; —  
The pale and quiet moon  
Makes her calm forehead bare,  
And the last fragments of the storm,  
Like shattered rigging from a fight at sea,  
Silent and few, are drifting over me.

1839.

## THE GROWTH OF THE LEGEND.

## A FRAGMENT.

A LEGEND that grew in the forest's hush  
Slowly as tear-drops gather and gush,  
When a word some poet chanced to say  
Ages ago, in his careless way,  
Brings our youth back to us out of its shroud  
Clearly as under yon thunder-cloud  
I see that white sea-gull. It grew and grew,  
From the pine-trees gathering a sombre hue,  
Till it seems a mere murmur out of the vast  
Norwegian forests of the past ;  
And it grew itself like a true Northern pine,  
First a little slender line,

Like a mermaid's green eyelash, and then anon  
A stem that a tower might rest upon,  
Standing spear-straight in the waist-deep moss,  
Its bony roots clutching around and across,  
As if they would tear up earth's heart in their grasp  
Ere the storm should uproot them or make them unclasp ;  
Its cloudy boughs singing, as suiteth the pine,  
To shrunk snow-bearded sea-kings old songs of the brine,  
Till they straightened and let their staves fall to the floor,  
Hearing waves moan again on the perilous shore  
Of Vinland, perhaps, while their prow groped its way  
'Twixt the frothy gnashed tusks of some ship-crunching  
bay.

So, pine-like, the legend grew, strong-limbed and tall,  
As the Gypsy child grows that eats crusts in the hall ;  
It sucked the whole strength of the earth and the sky,  
Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter, all brought it supply,  
'T was a natural growth, and stood fearlessly there,  
A true part of the landscape as sea, land, and air ;  
For it grew in good times, ere the fashion it was  
To force up these wild births of the woods under glass,

And so, if 't is told as it should be told,  
Though 't were sung under Venice's moonlight of  
gold,

You would hear the old voice of its mother, the pine,  
Murmur sealike and Northern through every line,  
And the verses should hang, self-sustained and free,  
Round the vibrating stem of the melody,  
Like the lithe sun-steeped limbs of the parent tree.

Yes, the pine is the mother of legends ; what food  
For their grim roots is left when the thousand-yearred  
wood —

The dim-aisled cathedral, whose tall arches spring  
Light, sinewy, graceful, firm-set as the wing  
From Michael's white shoulder — is hewn and defaced  
By iconoclast axes in desperate waste,  
And its wrecks seek the ocean it prophesied long,  
Cassandra-like, crooning its mystical song ?  
Then the legends go with them, — even yet on the sea  
A wild virtue is left in the touch of the tree,  
And the sailor's night-watches are thrilled to the core  
With the lineal offspring of Odin and Thor.

Yes, wherever the pine-wood has never let in,  
Since the day of creation, the light and the din  
Of manifold life, but has safely conveyed  
From the midnight primeval its armful of shade,  
And has kept the weird Past with its sagas alive  
Within sound of the hum of To-day's busy hive,  
There the legend takes root in the age-gathered gloom,  
And its murmurous boughs for their tossing find room.

Where Aroostook, far-heard, seems to sob as he goes  
Groping down to the sea 'neath his mountainous snows ;  
Where the lake's froze Sahara of never-tracked white,  
When the crack shoots across it, complains to the night  
With a long, lonely moan, that leagues northward is lost,  
As the ice shrinks away from the tread of the frost ;  
Where the lumberers sit by the log-fires which throw  
Their own threatening shadows far round o'er the snow,  
When the wolf howls aloof, and the wavering glare  
Flashes out from the blackness the eyes of the bear,  
When the wood's huge recesses, half-lighted, supply  
A canvas where Fancy her mad brush may try,

Blotting in giant Horrors that venture not down  
Through the right-angled streets of the brisk, white-  
washed town,  
But skulk in the depths of the measureless wood  
'Mid the Dark's creeping whispers that curdle the blood,  
When the eye, glanced in dread o'er the shoulder, may  
dream,  
Ere it shrinks to the camp-fire's companioning gleam,  
That it saw the fierce ghost of the Red Man crouch back  
To the shroud of the tree-trunk's invincible black ; —  
There the old shapes crowd thick round the pine-  
shadowed camp,  
Which shun the keen gleam of the scholarly lamp,  
And the seed of the legend finds true Norland ground,  
While the border-tale 's told and the canteen flits round.

## A CONTRAST.



THY love thou sentest oft to me,  
And still as oft I thrust it back ;  
Thy messengers I could not see  
In those who every thing did lack, —  
The poor, the outcast, and the black.

Pride held his hand before mine eyes,  
The world with flattery stuffed mine ears ;  
I looked to see a monarch's guise,  
Nor dreamed thy love would knock for years,  
Poor, naked, fettered, full of tears.

Yet, when I sent my love to thee,  
Thou with a smile didst take it in,  
And entertain'dst it royally,  
Though grimed with earth, with hunger thin,  
And leprous with the taint of sin.

Now every day thy love I meet,  
As o'er the earth it wanders wide,  
With weary step and bleeding feet,  
Still knocking at the heart of pride  
And offering grace, though still denied.



## EXTREME UNCTION.



Go ! leave me, Priest ; my soul would be  
Alone with the consoler, Death ;  
Far sadder eyes than thine will see  
This crumbling clay yield up its breath ;  
These shrivelled hands have deeper stains  
Than holy oil can cleanse away, —  
Hands that have plucked the world's coarse gains  
As erst they plucked the flowers of May.

Call, if thou canst, to those gray eyes  
Some faith from youth's traditions wrung ;  
This fruitless husk which dustward dries  
Has been a heart once, has been young ;

On this bowed head the awful Past  
Once laid its consecrating hands ;  
The Future in its purpose vast  
Paused, waiting my supreme commands.

But look ! whose shadows block the door ?  
Who are those two that stand aloof ?  
See ! on my hands this freshening gore  
Writes o'er again its crimson proof !  
My looked-for death-bed guests are met ; —  
There my dead Youth doth wring its hands,  
And there, with eyes that goad me yet,  
The ghost of my Ideal stands !

God bends from out the deep and says, —  
“ I gave thee the great gift of life ;  
Wast thou not called in many ways ?  
Are not my earth and heaven at strife ?  
I gave thee of my seed to sow,  
Bringest thou me my hundred-fold ? ”  
Can I look up with face aglow,  
And answer, “ Father, here is gold ” ?

I have been innocent ; God knows  
    When first this wasted life began,  
Not grape with grape more kindly grows,  
    Than I with every brother-man :  
Now here I gasp ; what lose my kind,  
    When this fast-ebbing breath shall part ?  
What bands of love and service bind  
    This being to the world's sad heart ?

Christ still was wandering o'er the earth  
    Without a place to lay his head ;  
He found free welcome at my hearth,  
    He shared my cup and brake my bread :  
Now, when I hear those steps sublime,  
    That bring the other world to this,  
My snake-turned nature, sunk in slime,  
    Starts sideways with defiant hiss.

Upon the hour when I was born,  
    God said, " Another man shall be,"  
And the great Maker did not scorn  
    Out of himself to fashion me ;

He sunned me with his ripening looks,  
And Heaven's rich instincts in me grew,  
As effortless as woodland nooks  
Send violets up and paint them blue.

Yes, I who now, with angry tears,  
Am exiled back to brutish clod,  
Have borne unquenched for fourscore years  
A spark of the eternal God ;  
And to what end ? How yield I back  
The trust for such high uses given ?  
Heaven's light hath but revealed a track  
Whereby to crawl away from heaven.

Men think it is an awful sight  
To see a soul just set adrift  
On that drear voyage from whose night  
The ominous shadows never lift ;  
But 't is more awful to behold  
A helpless infant newly born,  
Whose little hands unconscious hold  
The keys of darkness and of morn.

Mine held them once ; I flung away  
Those keys that might have open set  
The golden sluices of the day,  
But clutch the keys of darkness yet ;—  
I hear the reapers singing go  
Into God's harvest ; I, that might  
With them have chosen, here below  
Grove shuddering at the gates of night.

O glorious Youth, that once wast mine !  
O high Ideal ! all in vain  
Ye enter at this ruined shrine  
Whence worship ne'er shall rise again ;  
The bat and owl inhabit here,  
The snake nests in the altar-stone,  
The sacred vessels moulder near,  
The image of the God is gone.

## THE OAK.



WHAT gnarled stretch, what depth of shade, is his !

There needs no crown to mark the forest's king ;

How in his leaves outshines full summer's bliss !

Sun, storm, rain, dew, to him their tribute bring,

Which he with such benignant royalty

Accepts, as overpayeth what is lent ;

All nature seems his vassal proud to be,

And cunning only for his ornament.

How towers he, too, amid the billowed snows,

An unquelled exile from the summer's throne,

Whose plain, uncinctured front more kingly shows,

Now that the obscuring courtier leaves are flown !

His boughs make music of the winter air,  
Jewelled with sleet, like some cathedral front  
Where clinging snow-flakes with quaint art repair  
The dents and furrows of Time's envious brunt.

How doth his patient strength the rude March wind  
Persuade to seem glad breaths of summer breeze,  
And win the soil, that fain would be unkind,  
To swell his revenues with proud increase !  
He is the gem ; and all the landscape wide  
(So doth his grandeur isolate the sense)  
Seems but the setting, worthless all beside,  
An empty socket, were he fallen thence.

So, from oft converse with life's wintry gales,  
Should man learn how to clasp with tougher roots  
The inspiring earth ; — how otherwise avails  
The leaf-creating sap that sunward shoots ?  
So every year that falls with noiseless flake  
Should fill old scars up on the stormward side,  
And make hoar age revered for age's sake,  
Not for traditions of youth's leafy pride.

So, from the pinched soil of a churlish fate,  
    'True hearts compel the sap of sturdier growth,  
So between earth and heaven stand simply great,  
    That these shall seem but their attendants both ;  
For nature's forces with obedient zeal  
    Wait on the rooted faith and oaken will ;  
As quickly the pretender's cheat they feel,  
    And turn mad Pucks to flout and mock him still.

Lord ! all thy works are lessons, — each contains  
    Some emblem of man's all-containing soul ;  
Shall he make fruitless all thy glorious pains,  
    Delving within thy grace an eyeless mole ?  
Make me the least of thy Dodona-grove,  
    Cause me some message of thy truth to bring,  
Speak but a word through me, nor let thy love  
    Among my boughs disdain to perch and sing.



## THE ROYAL PEDIGREE.



LET those who will claim gentle birth,  
And take their pride in Norman blood,  
The purest ancestry on earth  
Must find its spring in Adam's mud ;  
And all, though noble now or base,  
From the same level took their rise,  
And, side by side, in loving grace,  
Leaped, crystal-clear, from Paradise.

We are no spawn of bartered love,  
That 's welded to the heart with gold,  
Put on as lightly as a glove,  
As lightly doffed, scarce three days old, —

A love that marries lands to lands,  
The passion of two title-deeds,  
That loosely rivets two cold hands,  
And idler heirs to idlers breeds.

Large-limbed, the friend of sun and air,  
Its sinewy arms with labor brown,  
With glad, strong soul, that seemed to wear  
Its human nature like a crown, —  
Such was the love from which we sprang,  
A love clear-hearted as the morn,  
Which through life's toils and troubles sang  
Like a tall reaper 'mid the corn.

Life lay before us bare and broad,  
To conquer with two hands alone, —  
But we had faith in man and God,  
And proudly claimed our Father's throne ;  
We made our vassal of the Now,  
And, from its want and woe and wrong,  
Our hearts rose lightly as a bough  
From which a bird hath soared in song.

Among our sires no high-born chief  
Freckled his hands with peasant-gore,  
No spurred and coroneted thief  
Set his mailed heel upon the poor ;  
No, we are come of nobler line,  
With larger heart within the breast,  
Large heart by suffering made divine, —  
We draw our lineage from the Oppressed :

Not from the sceptred brutes who reigned,  
But from the humble souls who bore,  
And so a godlike patience gained,  
Which, suffering much, could suffer more,  
Which learned forgiveness, and the grace  
That cometh of a bended knee, —  
From martyrs such as these we trace  
Our royal genealogy.

There 's not a great soul gone before  
That is not numbered in our clan,  
Who, when the world took side with power,  
Stood boldly on the side of Man ;

All hero-spirits plain and grand,  
That for the Ages ope the door,  
All Labor's dusty monarchs, stand  
Among the children of the poor.

Let others boast of ancestors  
Who handed down some idle right  
To stand beside their tyrant's horse,  
Or buckle his spurs before the fight ;  
We, too, have our ancestral claim  
Of marching ever in the van,  
Of giving ourselves to steel and flame,  
Where aught 's to be achieved for man.

And is not this a family-tree  
Worth keeping fair from age to age ?  
Was ever such an ancestry  
Gold-blazoned on the herald's page ?  
In dear New England let us still  
Maintain our race and title pure,  
The men and women of heart and will,  
The monarchs who ENDURE.

## ABOVE AND BELOW.



## I.

O DWELLERS in the valley-land,  
Who in deep twilight grope and cower,  
Till the slow mountain's dial-hand  
Shortens to noon's triumphal hour, —  
While ye sit idle, do ye think  
The Lord's great work sits idle too?  
That light dare not o'erleap the brink  
Of morn, because 't is dark with you?

Though yet your valleys skulk in night,  
In God's ripe fields the day is cried,

And reapers, with their sickles bright,  
Troop, singing, down the mountain-side :  
Come up, and feel what health there is  
In the frank Dawn's delighted eyes,  
As, bending with a pitying kiss,  
The night-shed tears of Earth she dries !

The Lord wants reapers : O, mount up,  
Before night comes, and says, — " Too late !"  
Stay not for taking scrip or cup,  
The Master hungers while ye wait :  
'T is from these heights alone your eyes  
The advancing spears of day can see,  
Which o'er the eastern hill-tops rise,  
To break your long captivity.

## II.

Lone watcher on the mountain-height !  
It is right precious to behold  
The first long surf of climbing light  
Flood all the thirsty east with gold ;

But we, who in the shadow sit,  
    Know also when the day is nigh,  
Seeing thy shining forehead lit  
    With his inspiring prophecy.

Thou hast thine office ; we have ours ;  
    God lacks not early service here,  
But what are thine eleventh hours  
    He counts with us for morning cheer ;  
Our day, for Him, is long enough,  
    And when He giveth work to do,  
The bruised reed is amply tough  
    To pierce the shield of error through.

But not the less do thou aspire  
    Light's earlier messages to preach ;  
Keep back no syllable of fire, —  
    Plunge deep the rowels of thy speech.  
Yet God deems not thine aëried sight  
    More worthy than our twilight dim, —  
For meek Obedience, too, is Light,  
    And following that is finding Him.

## THE CAPTIVE.



It was past the hour of trysting,  
But she lingered for him still ;  
Like a child, the eager streamlet  
Leaped and laughed adown the hill,  
Happy to be free at twilight  
From its toiling at the mill.

Then the great moon on a sudden,  
Ominous, and red as blood,  
Startling as a new creation,  
O'er the eastern hill-top stood,



Casting deep and deeper shadows  
Through the mystery of the wood.

Dread closed huge and vague about her,  
And her thoughts turned fearfully  
To her heart, if there some shelter  
From the silence there might be,  
Like bare cedars leaning inland  
From the blighting of the sea.

Yet he came not, and the stillness  
Dampened round her like a tomb ;  
She could feel cold eyes of spirits  
Looking on her through the gloom,  
She could hear the groping footsteps  
Of some blind, gigantic doom.

Suddenly the silence wavered  
Like a light mist in the wind,  
For a voice broke gently through it,  
Felt like sunshine by the blind,

And the dread, like mist in sunshine,  
Furled serenely from her mind.

“ Once my love, my love for ever, —  
Flesh or spirit, still the same ;  
If I missed the hour of trysting,  
Do not think my faith to blame,  
I, alas, was made a captive,  
As from Holy Land I came.

“ On a green spot in the desert,  
Gleaming like an emerald star,  
Where a palm-tree, in lone silence,  
Yearning for its mate afar,  
Droops above a silver runnel,  
Slender as a scymitar, —

“ There thou ’lt find the humble postern  
To the castle of my foe ;  
If thy love burn clear and faithful,  
Strike the gateway, green and low,

Ask to enter, and the warder  
Surely will not say thee no."

Slept again the aspen silence,  
But her loneliness was o'er ;  
Round her heart a motherly patience  
Wrapt its arms for evermore ;  
From her soul ebb'd back the sorrow,  
Leaving smooth the golden shore.

Donned she now the pilgrim scallop,  
Took the pilgrim staff in hand ;  
Like a cloud-shade, flitting eastward,  
Wandered she o'er sea and land ;  
Her soft footsteps in the desert  
Fell like cool rain on the sand.

Soon, beneath the palm-tree's shadow,  
Knelt she at the postern low ;  
And thereat she knocketh gently,  
Fearing much the warder's no ;

All her heart stood still and listened,  
As the door swung backward slow.

There she saw no surly warder  
With an eye like bolt and bar ;  
Through her soul a sense of music  
Throbbled, — and, like a guardian Lar,  
On the threshold stood an angel,  
Bright and silent as a star.

Fairest seemed he of God's seraphs,  
And her spirit, lily-wise,  
Blossomed when he turned upon her  
The deep welcome of his eyes,  
Sending upward to that sunlight  
All its dew for sacrifice.

Then she heard a voice come onward  
Singing with a rapture new,  
As Eve heard the songs in Eden,  
Dropping earthward with the dew ;

Well she knew the happy singer,  
Well the happy song she knew.

Forward leaped she o'er the threshold,  
Eager as a glancing surf;  
Fell from her the spirit's languor,  
Fell from her the body's scurf;—  
'Neath the palm next day some Arabs  
Found a corpse upon the turf.

## THE BIRCH-TREE.



RIPPLING through thy branches goes the sunshine,  
Among thy leaves that palpitate for ever ;  
Ovid in thee a pining Nymph had prisoned,  
The soul once of some tremulous inland river,  
Quivering to tell her woe, but, ah ! dumb, dumb for ever !

While all the forest, witched with slumberous moonshine,  
Holds up its leaves in happy, happy silence,  
Waiting the dew, with breath and pulse suspended, —  
I hear afar thy whispering, gleamy islands,  
And track thee wakeful still amid the wide-hung silence.

Upon the brink of some wood-nestled lakelet,  
Thy foliage, like the tresses of a Dryad,

Dripping about thy slim white stem, whose shadow  
Slopes quivering down the water's dusky quiet,  
Thou shrink'st as on her bath's edge would some  
startled Dryad.

Thou art the go-between of rustic lovers ;  
Thy white bark has their secrets in its keeping ;  
Reuben writes here the happy name of Patience,  
And thy lithe boughs hang murmuring and weeping  
Above her, as she steals the mystery from thy keeping.

Thou art to me like my beloved maiden,  
So frankly coy, so full of trembly confidences ;  
Thy shadow scarce seems shade, thy pattering leaflets  
Sprinkle their gathered sunshine o'er my senses,  
And Nature gives me all her summer confidences.

Whether my heart with hope or sorrow tremble,  
Thou sympathizest still ; wild and unquiet,  
I fling me down ; thy ripple, like a river,  
Flows valleyward, where calmness is, and by it  
My heart is floated down into the land of quiet.

## AN INTERVIEW WITH MILES STANDISH.



I SAT one evening in my room,  
In that sweet hour of twilight  
When blended thoughts, half light, half gloom,  
Throng through the spirit's skylight ;  
The flames by fits curled round the bars,  
Or up the chimney crinkled,  
While embers dropped like falling stars,  
And in the ashes tinkled.

I sat and mused ; the fire burned low,  
And, o'er my senses stealing,  
Crept something of the ruddy glow  
That bloomed on wall and ceiling ;



My pictures (they are very few, —  
The heads of ancient wise men)  
Smoothed down their knotted fronts, and grew  
As rosy as excisemen.

My antique high-backed Spanish chair  
Felt thrills through wood and leather,  
That had been strangers since whilere,  
'Mid Andalusian heather,  
The oak that made its sturdy frame  
His happy arms stretched over  
The ox whose fortunate hide became  
The bottom's polished cover.

It came out in that famous bark  
That brought our sires intrepid,  
Capacious as another ark  
For furniture decrepid; —  
For, as that saved of bird and beast  
A pair for propagation,  
So has the seed of these increased  
And furnished half the nation.

Kings sit, they say, in slippery seats ;  
But those slant precipices  
Of ice the northern voyager meets  
Less slippery are than this is ;  
To cling therein would pass the wit  
Of royal man or woman,  
And whatsoe'er can stay in it  
Is more or less than human.

My wonder, then, was not unmixed  
With merciful suggestion,  
When, as my roving eyes grew fixed  
Upon the chair in question,  
I saw its trembling arms inclose  
A figure grim and rusty,  
Whose doublet plain and plainer hose  
Were something worn and dusty.

Now even such men as Nature forms  
Merely to fill the street with,  
Once turned to ghosts by hungry worms,  
Are serious things to meet with ;

Your penitent spirits are no jokes,  
And, though I 'm not averse to  
A quiet shade, even they are folks  
One cares not to speak first to.

Who knows, thought I, but he has come,  
By Charon kindly ferried,  
To tell me of a mighty sum  
Behind my wainscot buried?  
There is a buccaneerish air  
About that garb outlandish —  
Just then the ghost drew up his chair  
And said, "My name is Standish.

"I come from Plymouth, deadly bored  
With toasts, and songs, and speeches,  
As long and flat as my old sword,  
As threadbare as my breeches :  
*They* understand us Pilgrims ! they,  
Smooth men with rosy faces,  
Strength's knots and gnarls all pared away,  
And varnish in their places !

“ We had some toughness in our grain,  
The eye to rightly see us is  
Not just the one that lights the brain  
Of drawing-room Tyrtæuses :  
*They* talk about their Pilgrim blood,  
Their birthright high and holy ! —  
A mountain-stream that ends in mud  
Methinks is melancholy.

“ He had stiff knees, the Puritan,  
That were not good at bending ;  
The homespun dignity of man  
He thought was worth defending ;  
He did not, with his pinchbeck ore,  
His country's shame forgotten,  
Gild Freedom's coffin o'er and o'er,  
When all within was rotten.

“ These loud ancestral boasts of yours,  
How can they else than vex us ?  
Where were your dinner orators  
When slavery grasped at Texas ?

Dumb on his knees was every one  
That now is bold as Cæsar, —  
Mere pegs to hang an office on  
Such stalwart men as these are.”

“ Good Sir,” I said, “ you seem much stirred ;  
The sacred compromises —— ”  
“ Now God confound the dastard word !  
My gall thereat arises :  
Northward it hath this sense alone,  
That you, your conscience blinding,  
Shall bow your fool’s nose to the stone,  
When slavery feels like grinding.

“ ’T is shame to see such painted sticks  
In Vane’s and Winthrop’s places,  
To see your spirit of Seventy-six  
Drag humbly in the traces,  
With slavery’s lash upon her back,  
And herds of office-holders  
To shout applause, as, with a crack,  
It peels her patient shoulders.

“ *We* forefathers to such a rout ! —

No, by my faith in God’s word ! ”

Half rose the ghost, and half drew out

The ghost of his old broadsword,

Then thrust it slowly back again,

And said, with reverent gesture,

“ No, Freedom, no ! blood should not stain

The hem of thy white vesture.

“ I feel the soul in me draw near

The mount of prophesying ;

In this bleak wilderness I hear

A John the Baptist crying ;

Far in the east I see upleap

The streaks of first forewarning,

And they who sowed the light shall reap

The golden sheaves of morning.

“ Child of our travail and our woe,

Light in our day of sorrow,

Through my rapt spirit I foreknow

The glory of thy morrow ;

I hear great steps, that through the shade  
    Draw nigher still and nigher,  
And voices call like that which bade  
    The prophet come up higher.”

I looked, no form mine eyes could find,  
    I heard the red cock crowing,  
And through my window-chinks the wind  
    A dismal tune was blowing ;  
Thought I, My neighbour Buckingham  
    Hath somewhat in him gritty,  
Some Pilgrim-stuff that hates all sham,  
    And he will print my ditty.

ON THE CAPTURE OF CERTAIN FUGITIVE  
SLAVES NEAR WASHINGTON.

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Look on who will in apathy, and stifle they who  
can,

The sympathies, the hopes, the words, that make man  
truly man ;

Let those whose hearts are dungeoned up with interest  
or with ease

Consent to hear with quiet pulse of loathsome deeds  
like these !

I first drew in New England's air, and from her hardy  
breast

Sucked in the tyrant-hating milk that will not let me  
rest ;



And if my words seem tréason to the dullard and the  
tame,  
'T is but my Bay-State dialect, — our fathers spake the  
same !

Shame on the costly mockery of piling stone on  
stone  
To those who won our liberty, the heroes dead and  
gone,  
While we look coldly on, and see law-shielded ruffians  
slay  
The men who fain would win their own, the heroes of  
to-day !

Are we pledged to craven silence? O, fling it to the  
wind,  
The parchment wall that bars us from the least of  
human kind, —  
That makes us cringe, and temporize, and dumbly stand  
at rest,  
While Pity's burning flood of words is red-hot in the  
breast !

Though we break our fathers' promise, we have nobler  
duties first ;

The traitor to Humanity is the traitor most ac-  
cursed ;

Man is more than Constitutions ; better rot beneath the  
sod,

Than be true to Church and State while we are doubly  
false to God !

We owe allegiance to the State ; but deeper, truer,  
more,

To the sympathies that God hath set within our spirit's  
core ; —

Our country claims our fealty ; we grant it so, but  
then

Before Man made us citizens, great Nature made us  
men.

He 's true to God who 's true to man ; wherever wrong  
is done,

To the humblest and the weakest, 'neath the all-behold-  
ing sun,

That wrong is also done to us ; and they are slaves  
    most base,  
Whose love of right is for themselves, and not for all  
    their race.

God works for all. Ye cannot hem the hope of being  
    free  
With parallels of latitude, with mountain-range or  
    sea.  
Put golden padlocks on Truth's lips, be callous as ye  
    will,  
From soul to soul, o'er all the world, leaps one electric  
    thrill.

Chain down your slaves with ignorance, ye cannot keep  
    apart,  
With all your craft of tyranny, the human heart from  
    heart :  
When first the Pilgrims landed on the Bay State's iron  
    shore,  
The word went forth that slavery should one day be no  
    more.

Out from the land of bondage 't is decreed our slaves  
shall go,

And signs to us are offered, as erst to Pharaoh ;  
If we are blind, their exodus, like Israel's of yore,  
Through a Red Sea is doomed to be, whose surges are  
of gore.

'T is ours to save our brethren, with peace and love to  
win

Their darkened hearts from error, ere they harden it to  
sin ;

But if man before his duty with a listless spirit stands,  
Ere long the Great Avenger takes the work from out  
his hands.

## ON THE DEATH OF CHARLES T. TORREY.



Woe worth the hour when it is crime  
To plead the poor dumb bondman's cause,  
When all that makes the heart sublime,  
The glorious throbs that conquer time,  
Are traitors to our cruel laws!

He strove among God's suffering poor  
One gleam of brotherhood to send;  
The dungeon oped its hungry door  
To give the truth one martyr more,  
Then shut,—and here behold the end!

O Mother State ! when this was done,  
     No pitying throe thy bosom gave ;  
 Silent thou saw'st the death-shroud spun,  
 And now thou givest to thy son  
     The stranger's charity, — a grave.

Must it be thus for ever ? No !  
     The hand of God sows not in vain ;  
 Long sleeps the darkling seed below,  
 The seasons come, and change, and go,  
     And all the fields are deep with grain.

Although our brother lie asleep,  
     Man's heart still struggles, still aspires ;  
 His grave shall quiver yet, while deep  
 Through the brave Bay State's pulses leap  
     Her ancient energies and fires.

When hours like this the senses' gush  
     Have stilled, and left the spirit room,  
 It hears amid the eternal hush  
 The swooping pinions' dreadful rush,  
     That bring the vengeance and the doom ; —

Not man's brute vengeance, such as rends

What rivets man to man apart, —

God doth not so bring round his ends,

But waits the ripened time, and sends

His mercy to the oppressor's heart.

## REMEMBERED MUSIC.

A FRAGMENT.

THICK-rushing, like an ocean vast  
Of bisons the far prairie shaking,  
The notes crowd heavily and fast  
As surfs, one plunging while the last  
Draws seaward from its foamy breaking.

Or in low murmurs they began,  
Rising and rising momentarily,  
As o'er a harp Æolian  
A fitful breeze, until they ran  
Up to a sudden ecstasy.



And then, like minute-drops of rain  
    Ringing in water silverly,  
They lingering dropped and dropped again,  
Till it was almost like a pain  
    To listen when the next would be.

1840.

## SONG :

To M. L.

A LILY thou wast when I saw thee first,  
     A lily-bud not opened quite,  
     That hourly grew more pure and white,  
 By morning, and noontide, and evening nursed :  
     In all of nature thou hadst thy share ;  
     Thou wast waited on  
     By the wind and sun ;  
     The rain and the dew for thee took care ;  
     It seemed thou never couldst be more fair.

A lily thou wast when I saw thee first,  
     A lily-bud ; but, O, how strange,  
     How full of wonder was the change,  
 When, ripe with all sweetness, thy full bloom burst !

How did the tears to my glad eyes start,  
    When the woman-flower  
    Reached its blossoming hour,  
And I saw the warm deeps of thy golden heart!

Glad death may pluck thee, but never before  
    The gold dust of thy bloom divine  
    Hath dropped from thy heart into mine,  
To quicken its faint germs of heavenly lore ;  
    For no breeze comes nigh thee but carries away  
    Some impulses bright  
    Of fragrance and light,  
Which fall upon souls that are lone and astray,  
To plant fruitful hopes of the flower of day.

## TO THE DANDELION.



DEAR common flower, that grow'st beside the way,  
Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold,  
First pledge of blithesome May,  
Which children pluck, and, full of pride, uphold,  
High-hearted buccaneers, o'erjoyed that they  
An Eldorado in the grass have found,  
Which not the rich earth's ample round  
May match in wealth,—thou art more dear to me  
Than all the prouder summer-blooms may be.

Gold such as thine ne'er drew the Spanish prow  
Through the primeval hush of Indian seas,  
Nor wrinkled the lean brow  
Of age, to rob the lover's heart of ease ;  
'T is the spring's largess, which she scatters now

To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand,  
    Though most hearts never understand  
To take it at God's value, but pass by  
The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.

Thou art my tropics and mine Italy ;  
To look at thee unlocks a warmer clime ;  
    The eyes thou givest me  
Are in the heart, and heed not space or time :  
    Not in mid June the golden-cuirassed bee  
Feels a more summer-like, warm ravishment  
    In the white lily's breezy tent,  
His conquered Sybaris, than I, when first  
From the dark green thy yellow circles burst.

Then think I of deep shadows on the grass,—  
Of meadows where in sun the cattle graze,  
    Where, as the breezes pass,  
The gleaming rushes lean a thousand ways, —  
    Of leaves that slumber in a cloudy mass,  
Or whiten in the wind, — of waters blue  
    That from the distance sparkle through

Some woodland gap, — and of a sky above,  
Where one white cloud like a stray lamb doth move.

My childhood's earliest thoughts are linked with thee ;  
The sight of thee calls back the robin's song,

Who, from the dark old tree  
Beside the door, sang clearly all day long,

And I, secure in childish piety,  
Listened as if I heard an angel sing

With news from heaven, which he did bring  
Fresh every day to my untainted ears,  
When birds and flowers and I were happy peers.

How like a prodigal doth nature seem,  
When thou, for all thy gold, so common art !

Thou teachest me to deem  
More sacredly of every human heart,  
Since each reflects in joy its scanty gleam  
Of heaven, and could some wondrous secret show,

Did we but pay the love we owe,  
And with a child's undoubting wisdom look  
On all these living pages of God's book.

## THE GHOST-SEER.



YE who, passing graves by night,  
Glance not to the left nor right,  
Lest a spirit should arise,  
Cold and white, to freeze your eyes,  
Some weak phantom, which your doubt  
Shapes upon the dark without  
From the dark within, a guess  
At the spirit's deathlessness,  
Which ye entertain with fear  
In your self-built dungeon here,  
Where ye sell your God-given lives  
Just for gold to buy you gyves,—

Ye without a shudder meet,  
In the city's noonday street,  
Spirits sadder and more dread  
Than from out the clay have fled,  
Buried, beyond hope of light,  
In the body's haunted night !

See ye not that woman pale ?  
There are bloodhounds on her trail !  
Bloodhounds two, all gaunt and lean, —  
For the soul their scent is keen, —  
Want and Sin, and Sin is last, —  
They have followed far and fast ;  
Want gave tongue, and, at her howl,  
Sin awakened with a growl.  
Ah, poor girl ! she had a right  
To a blessing from the light,  
Title-deeds to sky and earth  
God gave to her at her birth,  
But, before they were enjoyed,  
Poverty had made them void,



And had drunk the sunshine up  
From all nature's ample cup,  
Leaving her a first-born's share  
In the dregs of darkness there.  
Often, on the sidewalk bleak,  
Hungry, all alone, and weak,  
She has seen, in night and storm,  
Rooms o'erflow with firelight warm,  
Which, outside the window-glass,  
Doubled all the cold, alas !  
Till each ray that on her fell  
Stabbed her like an icicle,  
And she almost loved the wail  
Of the bloodhounds on her trail.  
Till the floor becomes her bier,  
She shall feel their pantings near,  
Close upon her very heels,  
Spite of all the din of wheels ;  
Shivering on her pallet poor,  
She shall hear them at the door  
Whine and scratch to be let in,  
Sister bloodhounds, Want and Sin !

Hark ! that rustle of a dress,  
Stiff with lavish costliness !  
Here comes one whose cheek would flush  
But to have her garment brush  
'Gainst the girl whose fingers thin  
Wove the weary broidery in,  
Bending backward from her toil,  
Lest her tears the silk might soil,  
And, in midnight's chill and murk,  
Stitched her life into the work,  
Shaping from her bitter thought  
Heart's-ease and forget-me-not,  
Satirizing her despair  
With the emblems woven there.

Little doth the wearer heed  
Of the heart-break in the brede ;  
A hyena by her side  
Skulks, down-looking, — it is Pride.  
He digs for her in the earth,  
Where lie all her claims of birth,

With his foul paws rooting o'er  
Some long-buried ancestor,  
Who, perhaps, a statue won  
By the ill deeds he had done,  
By the innocent blood he shed,  
By the desolation spread  
Over happy villages,  
Blotting out the smile of peace.  
Round her heart and round her brain  
Wealth hath linked a golden chain,  
Which doth close and closer press  
Heart and brain to narrowness.  
Every morn and every night  
She must bare that bosom white,  
Which so thrillingly doth rise  
'Neath its proud embroideries,  
That its mere heave lets men know  
How much whiter 't is than snow, —  
She must bare it, and, unseen,  
Suckle that hyena lean ; —  
Ah ! the fountain's angel shrinks,  
And forsakes it while he drinks !

There walks Judas, he who sold  
Yesterday his Lord for gold,  
Sold God's presence in his heart  
For a proud step in the mart ;  
He hath dealt in flesh and blood, —  
At the bank his name is good,  
At the bank, and only there,  
'T is a marketable ware.  
In his eyes that stealthy gleam  
Was not learned of sky or stream,  
But it has the cold, hard glint  
Of new dollars from the mint.  
Open now your spirit's eyes,  
Look through that poor clay disguise  
Which has thickened, day by day,  
'Till it keeps all light at bay,  
And his soul in pitchy gloom  
Gropes about its narrow tomb,  
From whose dank and slimy walls  
Drop by drop the horror falls.  
Look ! a serpent lank and cold  
Hugs his spirit fold on fold ;

From his heart, all day and night,  
It doth suck God's blessed light.  
Drink it will, and drink it must,  
Till the cup holds naught but dust ;  
All day long he hears it hiss,  
Writhing in its fiendish bliss ;  
All night long he sees its eyes  
Flicker with foul ecstasies,  
As the spirit ebbs away  
Into the absorbing clay.

Who is he that skulks, afraid  
Of the trust he has betrayed,  
Shuddering if perchance a gleam  
Of old nobleness should stream  
Through the pent, unwholesome room,  
Where his shrunk soul cowers in gloom, —  
Spirit sad beyond the rest  
By more instinct for the best ?  
'T is a poet who was sent  
For a bad world's punishment,

By compelling it to see  
Golden glimpses of To Be,  
By compelling it to hear  
Songs that prove the angels near ;  
Who was sent to be the tongue  
Of the weak and spirit-wrung,  
Whence the fiery-winged Despair  
In men's shrinking eyes might flare.  
'T is our hope doth fashion us  
To base use or glorious :  
He who might have been a lark  
Of Truth's morning, from the dark  
Raining down melodious hope  
Of a freer, broader scope,  
Aspirations, prophecies,  
Of the spirit's full sunrise,  
Chose to be a bird of night,  
Which, with eyes refusing light,  
Hooted from some hollow tree  
Of the world's idolatry.  
'T is his punishment to hear  
Flutterings of pinions near,

And his own vain wings to feel  
Drooping downward to his heel,  
All their grace and import lost,  
Burdening his weary ghost :  
Ever walking by his side  
He must see his angel guide,  
Who at intervals doth turn  
Looks on him so sadly stern,  
With such ever-new surprise  
Of hushed anguish in her eyes,  
That it seems the light of day  
From around him shrinks away,  
Or drops blunted from the wall  
Built around him by his fall.  
Then the mountains, whose white peaks  
Catch the morning's earliest streaks,  
He must see, where prophets sit,  
Turning east their faces lit,  
Whence, with footsteps beautiful,  
To the earth, yet dim and dull,  
They the gladsome tidings bring  
Of the sunlight's hastening :

Never can those hills of bliss  
Be o'erclimbed by feet like his !

But enough ! O, do not dare  
From the next the veil to tear,  
Woven of station, trade, or dress,  
More obscene than nakedness,  
Wherewith plausible culture drapes  
Fallen Nature's myriad shapes !  
Let us rather love to mark  
How the unextinguished spark  
Will shine through the thin disguise  
Of our customs, pomps, and lies,  
And, not seldom blown to flame,  
Vindicate its ancient claim.



## THE MORNING-GLORY.



WE wreathed about our darling's head the morning-glory  
bright;

Her little face looked out beneath, so full of life and  
light,

So lit as with a sunrise, that we could only say,

She is the morning-glory true, and her poor types are  
they.

So always from that happy time we called her by their  
name,

And very fitting did it seem, for, sure as morning came,

Behind her cradle-bars she smiled to catch the first faint  
ray,  
As from the trellis smiles the flower and opens to the  
day.

But not so beautiful they rear their airy cups of  
blue,  
As turned her sweet eyes to the light brimmed with  
sleep's tender dew ;  
And not so close their tendrils fine round their supports  
are thrown,  
As those dear arms whose outstretched plea clasped all  
hearts to her own.

We used to think how she had come, even as comes the  
flower,  
The last and perfect added gift to crown love's morning  
hour,  
And how in her was imaged forth the love we could not  
say,  
As on the little dew-drops round shines back the heart  
of day.

We never could have thought, O God, that she must  
wither up,

Almost before a day was flown, like the morning-glory's  
cup ;

We never thought to see her droop her fair and noble  
head,

Till she lay stretched before our eyes, wilted, and cold,  
and dead.

The morning-glory's blossoming will soon be coming  
round,

We see their rows of heart-shaped leaves upspringing  
from the ground ;

The tender things the winter killed renew again their  
birth,

But the glory of our morning has passed away from  
earth.

O Earth, in vain our aching eyes stretch over thy green  
plain !

Too harsh thy dews, too gross thine air, her spirit to  
sustain, —

But up in groves of Paradise full surely we shall  
see

Our morning-glory beautiful twine round our dear Lord's  
knee.

## STUDIES FOR TWO HEADS.



## I.

SOME sort of heart I know is hers,—  
I chanced to feel her pulse one night;  
A brain she has that never errs,  
And yet is never nobly right;  
It does not leap to great results,  
But, in some corner out of sight,  
Suspects a spot of latent blight,  
And, o'er the impatient infinite,  
She bargains, haggles, and consults.

Her eye, — it seems a chemic test,  
And drops upon you like an acid ;  
It bites you with unconscious zest,  
So clear and bright, so coldly placid ;  
It holds you quietly aloof,  
It holds, — and yet it does not win you ;  
It merely puts you to the proof  
And sorts what qualities are in you ;  
It smiles, but never brings you nearer,  
It lights, — her nature draws not nigh ;  
'Tis but that yours is growing clearer  
To her assays ; — yes, try and try,  
You 'll get no deeper than her eye.

There, you are classified : she 's gone  
Far, far away into herself ;  
Each with its Latin label on,  
Your poor components, one by one,  
Are laid upon their proper shelf  
In her compact and ordered mind,  
And what of you is left behind  
Is no more to her than the wind ;

In that clear brain, which, day and night,  
    No movement of the heart e'er jostles,  
Her friends are ranged on left and right, —  
Here, silex, hornblende, sienite,  
    There, animal remains and fossils.

And yet, O subtile analyst,  
    That canst each property detect  
Of mood or grain, that canst untwist  
    Each tangled skein of intellect,  
And with thy scalpel eyes lay bare  
Each mental nerve more fine than air, —  
    O brain exact, that in thy scales  
Canst weigh the sun and never err,  
    For once thy patient science fails,  
    One problem still defies thy art ; —  
Thou never canst compute for her  
The distance and diameter  
    Of any simple human heart.

## II.

HEAR him but speak, and you will feel  
The shadows of the Portico  
Over your tranquil spirit steal,  
To modulate all joy and woe  
To one subdued, subduing glow ;  
Above our squabbling business-hours,  
Like Phidian Jove's, his beauty lowers,  
His nature satirizes ours ;  
A form and front of Attic grace,  
He shames the higgling market-place,  
And dwarfs our more mechanic powers.

What throbbing verse can fitly render  
That face, — so pure, so trembling-tender ?  
Sensation glimmers through its rest,  
It speaks unmanacled by words,  
As full of motion as a nest  
That palpitates with unfledged birds ;  
'T is likest to Bethesda's stream,  
Forewarned through all its thrilling springs,



White with the angel's coming gleam,  
And rippled with his fanning wings.

Hear him unfold his plots and plans,  
And larger destinies seem man's ;

    You conjure from his glowing face

    The omen of a fairer race ;

With one grand trope he boldly spans

The gulf wherein so many fall,

'Twixt possible and actual ;

His first swift word, talaria-shod,

Exuberant with conscious God,

Out of the choir of planets blots

The present earth with all its spots.

Himself unshaken as the sky,

His words, like whirlwinds, spin on high

    Systems and creeds pellmell together ;

'T is strange as to a deaf man's eye,

While trees uprooted splinter by,

    The dumb turmoil of stormy weather ;

    Less of iconoclast than shaper,

His spirit, safe behind the reach  
Of the tornado of his speech,  
Burns calmly as a glowworm's taper.

So great in speech, but, ah ! in act  
So overrun with vermin troubles,  
The coarse, sharp-cornered, ugly fact  
Of life collapses all his bubbles :  
Had he but lived in Plato's day,  
He might, unless my fancy errs,  
Have shared that golden voice's sway  
O'er barefooted philosophers.  
Our nipping climate hardly suits  
The ripening of ideal fruits ;  
His theories vanquish us all summer,  
But winter makes him dumb and dumber ;  
To see him 'mid life's needful things  
Is something painfully bewildering ;  
He seems an angel with clipt wings  
Tied to a mortal wife and children,  
And by a brother seraph taken  
In the act of eating eggs and bacon.

Like a clear fountain, his desire  
    Exults and leaps toward the light,  
In every drop it says "Aspire!"  
    Striving for more ideal height;  
And as the fountain, falling thence,  
    Crawls baffled through the common gutter,  
So, from his speech's eminence,  
He shrinks into the present tense,  
    Unkinged by foolish bread and butter.

Yet smile not, worldling, for in deeds  
    Not all of life that 's brave and wise is;  
He strews an ampler future's seeds,  
    'T is your fault if no harvest rises;  
Smooth back the sneer; for is it naught  
    That all he is and has is Beauty's?  
By soul the soul's gains must be wrought,  
The Actual claims our coarser thought,  
    The Ideal hath its higher duties.

## ON A PORTRAIT OF DANTE BY GIOTTO.



CAN this be thou who, lean and pale,  
With such immitigable eye  
Didst look upon those writhing souls in bale,  
And note each vengeance, and pass by  
Unmoved, save when thy heart by chance  
Cast backward one forbidden glance,  
And saw Francesca, with child's glee,  
Subdue and mount thy wild-horse knee  
And with proud hands control its fiery prance ?

With half-drooped lids, and smooth, round brow,  
And eye remote, that inly sees  
Fair Beatrice's spirit wandering now  
In some sea-lulled Hesperides,  
Thou movest through the jarring street,  
Secluded from the noise of feet  
By her gift-blossom in thy hand,  
Thy branch of palm from Holy Land ;—  
No trace is here of ruin's fiery sleet.

Yet there is something round thy lips  
That prophecies the coming doom,  
The soft, gray herald-shadow ere the eclipse  
Notches the perfect disk with gloom ;  
A something that would banish thee,  
And thine untamed pursuer be,  
From men and their unworthy fates,  
Though Florence had not shut her gates,  
And grief had loosed her clutch and let thee free.

Ah ! he who follows fearlessly  
The beckonings of a poet-heart

Shall wander, and without the world's decree,  
A banished man in field and mart;  
Harder than Florence' walls the bar  
Which with deaf sternness holds him far  
From home and friends, till death's release,  
And makes his only prayer for peace,  
Like thine, scarred veteran of a lifelong war!

## ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND'S CHILD.



DEATH never came so nigh to me before,  
Nor showed me his mild face : oft had I mused  
Of calm and peace and deep forgetfulness,  
Of folded hands, closed eyes, and heart at rest,  
And slumber sound beneath a flowery turf,  
Of faults forgotten, and an inner place  
Kept sacred for us in the heart of friends ;  
But these were idle fancies, satisfied  
With the mere husk of this great mystery,  
And dwelling in the outward shows of things.  
Heaven is not mounted to on wings of dreams,  
Nor doth the unthankful happiness of youth  
Aim thitherward, but floats from bloom to bloom,  
With earth's warm patch of sunshine well content :

'T is sorrow builds the shining ladder up,  
Whose golden rounds are our calamities,  
Whereon our firm feet planting, nearer God  
The spirit climbs, and hath its eyes unsealed.

True is it that Death's face seems stern and cold,  
When he is sent to summon those we love,  
But all God's angels come to us disguised;  
Sorrow and sickness, poverty and death,  
One after other lift their frowning masks,  
And we behold the seraph's face beneath,  
All radiant with the glory and the calm  
Of having looked upon the front of God.  
With every anguish of our earthly part  
The spirit's sight grows clearer; this was meant  
When Jesus touched the blind man's lids with clay.  
Life is the jailer, Death the angel sent  
To draw the unwilling bolts and set us free.  
He flings not ope the ivory gate of Rest, —  
Only the fallen spirit knocks at that, —  
But to benigner regions beckons us,  
To destinies of more rewarded toil.



In the hushed chamber, sitting by the dead,  
It grates on us to hear the flood of life  
Whirl rustling onward, senseless of our loss.  
The bee hums on ; around the blossomed vine  
Whirs the light humming-bird ; the cricket chirps ;  
The locust's shrill alarum stings the ear ;  
Hard by, the cock shouts lustily ; from farm to farm,  
His cheery brothers, telling of the sun,  
Answer, till far away the joyance dies :  
We never knew before how God had filled  
The summer air with happy living sounds ;  
All round us seems an overplus of life,  
And yet the one dear heart lies cold and still.  
It is most strange, when the great miracle  
Hath for our sakes been done, when we have had  
Our inwardest experience of God,  
When with his presence still the room expands,  
And is awed after him, that naught is changed,  
That Nature's face looks unacknowledging,  
And the mad world still dances heedless on  
After its butterflies, and gives no sign.  
'T is hard at first to see it all aright ;

In vain Faith blows her trump to summon back  
Her scattered troop ; yet, through the clouded glass  
Of our own bitter tears, we learn to look  
Undazzled on the kindness of God's face ;  
Earth is too dark, and Heaven alone shines through.

It is no little thing, when a fresh soul  
And a fresh heart, with their unmeasured scope  
For good, not gravitating earthward yet,  
But circling in diviner periods,  
Are sent into the world, — no little thing,  
When this unbounded possibility  
Into the outer silence is withdrawn.  
Ah, in this world, where every guiding thread  
Ends suddenly in the one sure centre, death,  
The visionary hand of Might-have-been  
Alone can fill Desire's cup to the brim !

How changed, dear friend, are thy part and thy  
child's !

He bends above *thy* cradle now, or holds  
His warning finger out to be thy guide ;

Thou art the nursling now ; he watches thee  
Slow learning, one by one, the secret things  
Which are to him used sights of every day ;  
He smiles to see thy wondering glances con  
The grass and pebbles of the spirit-world,  
To thee miraculous ; and he will teach  
Thy knees their due observances of prayer.

Children are God's apostles, day by day  
Sent forth to preach of love, and hope, and peace ;  
Nor hath thy babe his mission left undone.  
To me, at least, his going hence hath given  
Serener thoughts and nearer to the skies,  
And opened a new fountain in my heart  
For thee, my friend, and all : and, O, if Death  
More near approaches meditates, and clasps  
Even now some dearer, more reluctant hand,  
God, strengthen thou my faith, that I may see  
That 't is thine angel, who, with loving haste,  
Unto the service of the inner shrine  
Doth waken thy beloved with a kiss !

## ANTI-TEXAS.

WRITTEN ON OCCASION OF THE CONVENTION IN FANUELL HALL,

JANUARY 29, 1845.

O SPIRIT of the noble Past, when the old Bay State was  
free,

When her soil was uncontaminate from Berkshire to the  
sea,

When her sons beneath a foreign sky could answer bold  
and loud

Of the land that held their fathers' bones within her bo-  
som proud,—

O, for a moment, wake again! rise from thy ancient  
deep,

Where, in their waving sea-weed shrouds, are swung to  
dreamless sleep

Her tawny-visaged mariners, within whatever nook  
Old Ocean with his moaning surge in farthest seas hath  
shook !

Awake ! arise ! O, come again, called up from every  
sod

Where the moss-gray headstones cluster round the  
humble house of God,

Where rest the stern old Pilgrims, each little hamlet's  
pride,

Now, for the first time, sleeping with no weapon by their  
side !

O, come from where the same good blood, sworn foe to  
slavery still,

Came oozing through the homespun frock on that world-  
famous Hill,

And choked his voice whose last faint prayer was for  
his country's health, —

From being slave or making slave God save the Com-  
monwealth !

O, come from every battle-field, from every famous  
scene,  
Where any blood for Freedom shed hath made the grass  
more green,  
Where, if there be one darker spot and greener than the  
rest,  
It marks where Pilgrim blood hath flowed from a Massa-  
chusetts breast !

Rouse ! for the Massachusetts men are crowding, one  
and all,  
To look at the corpse of Freedom, where she lies in  
Faneuil Hall,  
Where she lies in her cradle stark and stiff, with death-  
damp on her brow,  
Though cravens would have us think her heart beat  
never so strong as now !

From clanging forge, from humming mill, from work-  
shop and from loom,  
From ploughing land and ploughing sea, from student's  
lonely room,

They 're coming with the will in their eyes, the Puritan-  
hearted men, —

At sound of their footsteps, the blood shall rush to Free-  
dom's cheek again!

Not now, as in the olden time, with braced-up hearts  
they come,

While King Street echoes jarringly the roll of British  
drum ;

Not now prepared to grasp the sword, and snatch the  
firelock down

From where it had hung since the old French war, with  
dust and cobwebs brown ; —

They 're coming but to speak one word, they 're coming  
but to say, —

“ Poor minions of the tyrant's cause, your grovelling  
hearts obey !

But, hear it, North, and hear it, South, and hear it, East  
and West,

We will not help you bind your slaves ! In God's  
name, we protest ! ”

And, though all other deeds of thine, dear Father-land,  
should be

Washed out, like writing upon sand, by Time's encroach-  
ing sea,

That single word shall stand sublime, nor perish with  
the rest, —

“Though the whole world sanction slavery, in God's  
name, we protest !”

If hand and foot we must be bound by deeds our fathers  
signed,

And must be cheated, gulled, and scorned because they  
too were blind,

Why, let them have their pound of flesh, — for that is  
in the bond, —

But woe to them, if they but take a half-hair's breadth  
beyond !

Is water running in our veins ? Do we remember  
still

Old Plymouth rock, and Lexington, and glorious Bunker  
Hill ?



The debt we owe our fathers' graves, and to the yet  
unborn,

Whose heritage ourselves must make a thing of pride or  
scorn ?

Gray Plymouth rock hath yet a tongue, and Concord is  
not dumb,

And voices from our fathers' graves and from the future  
come ;

They call on us to stand our ground, they charge us still  
to be

Not only free from chains ourselves, but foremost to  
make free !

If we must stand alone, what then ? the honor shall be  
more ; —

But we can never stand alone, while heaven still arches  
o'er,

While there 's a God to worship, a devil to be de-  
nied :

The good and true of every age stand with us side by  
side !

Or, if it must be, stand alone ! and stronger we shall  
grow

With every coward that deserts to join the tyrant  
foe ;

Let wealth and trade and empire go for what the dross  
is worth,

One man that stands for right outweighs the guilt of all  
the earth.

No, if the old Bay State were sunk, and, as in days of  
yore,

One single ship within her sides the hope of Freedom  
bore,

Run up again the pine-tree flag, and on the chainless  
sea

That flag should mark, where'er it waved, an island of  
the free !

## THE FALCONER.



I HAVE a falcon, swift and peerless  
As e'er was cradled in the pine ;  
No bird had ever eye so fearless  
Or wings so strong as this of mine ;  
The winds no better love to pilot  
The clouds with molten gold o'errun,  
Than him, a little burning islet,  
A star above the sunken sun.

But better he loves the lusty morning,  
When the last white star yet stands at bay,  
And earth, half waked, smiles a child's forewarning  
Of the longed-for mother-kiss of day ;

Then with a lark's heart doth he tower,  
By a glorious, upward instinct drawn, —  
No bee nestles deeper in the flower  
Than he in the bursting rose of dawn.

What joy to see his sails uplifted  
Against the worst that gales can dare,  
Through the nor'wester's surges drifted,  
Bold Viking of the sea of air !  
His eye is fierce, yet mildened over  
With something of a dove-like ruth ;  
I am his master less than lover, —  
My brave sun-seeker's name is Truth.

Where'er some hoary owl of Error  
Lags, though his native night be past,  
And at the sunshine hoots his terror,  
The falcon from my wrist I cast ;  
Swooping, he scares the birds uncleanly  
That in the holy temple prey,  
Then in the blue air floats serenely  
Above their hoarse anathema.

No harmless dove, no bird that singeth,  
Shudders to see him overhead ;  
The rush of his fierce pinions bringeth  
To innocent hearts no thrill of dread :  
Let frauds and wrongs and falsehoods shiver !  
For still between them and the sky  
The falcon Truth hangs poised for ever,  
And marks them with his vengeful eye.

## THE CHANGELING.



I HAD a little daughter,  
And she was given to me  
To lead me gently backward  
To the Heavenly Father's knee,  
That I, by the force of nature,  
Might in some dim wise divine  
The depth of his infinite patience  
To this wayward soul of mine.

I know not how others saw her,  
But to me she was wholly fair,  
And the light of the heaven she came from  
Still lingered and gleamed in her hair ;

For it was as wavy and golden,  
And as many changes took,  
As the shadows of sun-gilt ripples  
On the yellow bed of a brook.

To what can I liken her smiling  
Upon me, her kneeling lover,  
How it leaped from her lips to her eyelids,  
And dimpled her wholly over,  
Till her outstretched hands smiled also,  
And I almost seemed to see  
The very heart of her mother  
Sending sun through her veins to me !

She had been with us scarce a twelvemonth,  
And it hardly seemed a day,  
When a troop of wandering angels  
Stole my little daughter away ;  
Or perhaps those heavenly Zincoli  
But loosed the hampering strings,  
And when they had opened her cage-door,  
My little bird used her wings.

But they left in her stead a changeling,  
    A little angel child,  
That seems like her bud in full blossom,  
    And smiles as she never smiled :  
When I wake in the morning, I see it  
    Where she always used to lie,  
And I feel as weak as a violet  
    Alone 'neath the awful sky ;

As weak, yet as trustful also ;  
    For the whole year long I see  
All the wonders of faithful Nature  
    Still worked for the love of me ;  
Winds wander, and dews drip earthward,  
    Rain falls, suns rise and set,  
Earth whirls, and all but to prosper  
    A poor little violet.

This child is not mine as the first was,  
    I cannot sing it to rest,  
I cannot lift it up fatherly  
    And bliss it upon my breast ;



Yet it lies in my little one's cradle

And sits in my little one's chair,

And the light of the heaven she 's gone to

Transfigures its golden hair.

## AN INDIAN-SUMMER REVERIE.



WHAT visionary tints the year puts on,  
When falling leaves falter through motionless air  
Or numbly cling and shiver to be gone!  
How shimmer the low flats and pastures bare,  
As with her nectar Hebe Autumn fills  
The bowl between me and those distant hills,  
And smiles and shakes abroad her misty, tremulous hair!

No more the landscape holds its wealth apart,  
Making me poorer in my poverty,  
But mingles with my senses and my heart;  
My own projected spirit seems to me

In her own reverie the world to steep ;  
'T is she that waves to sympathetic sleep,  
Moving, as she is moved, each field and hill and tree.

How fuse and mix, with what unfelt degrees,  
Clasped by the faint horizon's languid arms,  
Each into each, the hazy distances !  
The softened season all the landscape charms ;  
Those hills, my native village that embay,  
In waves of dreamier purple roll away,  
And floating in mirage seem all the glimmering farms.

Far distant sounds the hidden chickadee  
Close at my side ; far distant sound the leaves ;  
The fields seem fields of dream, where Memory  
Wanders like gleaning Ruth ; and as the sheaves  
Of wheat and barley wavered in the eye  
Of Boaz as the maiden's glow went by,  
So tremble and seem remote all things the sense re-  
ceives.

The cock's shrill trump, that tells of scattered corn,  
Passed breezily on by all his flapping mates,

Faint and more faint, from barn to barn is borne,  
Southward, perhaps to far Magellan's Straits ;  
Dimly I catch the throb of distant flails ;  
Silently overhead the henhawk sails,  
With watchful, measuring eye, and for his quarry waits.

The sobered robin, hunger-silent now,  
Seeks cedar-berries blue, his autumn cheer ;  
The squirrel, on the shingly shagbark's bough,  
Now saws, now lists with downward eye and ear,  
Then drops his nut, and, with a chipping bound,  
Whisks to his winding fastness underground ;  
The clouds like swans drift down the streaming atmosphere.

O'er yon bare knoll the pointed cedar-shadows  
Drowse on the crisp, gray moss ; the ploughman's call  
Creeps faint as smoke from black, fresh-furrowed  
meadows ;  
The single crow a single caw lets fall ;  
And all around me every bush and tree  
Says Autumn 's here, and Winter soon will be,  
Who snows his soft, white sleep and silence over all.

The birch, most shy and lady-like of trees,  
Her poverty, as best she may, retrieves,  
And hints at her foregone gentilities  
With some saved relics of her wealth of leaves ;  
The swamp-oak, with his royal purple on,  
Glares red as blood across the sinking sun,  
As one who prouder to a falling fortune cleaves.

He looks a sachem, in red blanket wrapt,  
Who, 'mid some council of the sad-garbed whites,  
Erect and stern, in his own memories lapt,  
With distant eye broods over other sights,  
Sees the hushed wood the city's flare replace,  
The wounded turf heal o'er the railway's trace,  
And roams the savage Past of his undwindled rights.

The red-oak, softer-grained, yields all for lost,  
And, with his crumpled foliage stiff and dry,  
After the first betrayal of the frost,  
Rebuffs the kiss of the relenting sky ;  
The chestnuts, lavish of their long-hid gold,  
To the faint Summer, beggared now and old,  
Pour back the sunshine hoarded 'neath her favoring eye.

The ash her purple drops forgivingly  
And sadly, breaking not the general hush ;  
The maple-swamps glow like a sunset sea,  
Each leaf a ripple with its separate flush ;  
All round the wood's edge creeps the skirting  
blaze  
Of bushes low, as when, on cloudy days,  
Ere the rain falls, the cautious farmer burns his brush.

O'er yon low wall, which guards one unkempt zone,  
Where vines and weeds and scrub-oaks intertwine  
Safe from the plough, whose rough, discordant stone  
Is massed to one soft gray by lichens fine,  
The tangled blackberry, crossed and recrossed,  
weaves  
A prickly network of ensanguined leaves ;  
Hard by, with coral beads, the prim black-alders shine.

Pillaring with flame this crumbling boundary,  
Whose loose blocks topple 'neath the ploughboy's  
foot,  
Who, with each sense shut fast except the eye,  
Creeps close and scares the jay he hoped to shoot,

The woodbine up the elm's straight stem aspires,  
Coiling it, harmless, with autumnal fires ;  
In the ivy's paler blaze the martyr oak stands mute.

Below, the Charles — a stripe of nether sky,  
Now hid by rounded apple-trees between,  
Whose gaps the misplaced sail sweeps bellying  
by,  
Now flickering golden through a woodland screen,  
Then spreading out, at his next turn beyond,  
A silver circle, like an inland pond —  
Slips seaward silently through marshes purple and  
green.

Dear marshes ! vain to him the gift of sight  
Who cannot in their various incomes share,  
From every season drawn, of shade and light,  
Who sees in them but levels brown and bare ;  
Each change of storm or sunshine scatters free  
On them its largess of variety,  
For Nature with cheap means still works her wonders  
rare.

In Spring they lie one broad expanse of green,  
O'er which the light winds run with glimmering  
feet ;

Here, yellower stripes track out the creek unseen,  
There, darker growths o'er hidden ditches meet ;  
And purpler stains show where the blossoms crowd,  
As if the silent shadow of a cloud  
Hung there becalmed, with the next breath to fleet.

All round, upon the river's slippery edge,  
Witching to deeper calm the drowsy tide,  
Whispers and leans the breeze-entangling sedge ;  
Through emerald glooms the lingering waters slide,  
Or, sometimes wavering, throw back the sun,  
And the stiff banks in eddies melt and run  
Of dimpling light, and with the current seem to glide.

In Summer 't is a blithesome sight to see,  
As, step by step, with measured swing, they pass,  
The wide-ranked mowers wading to the knee,  
Their sharp scythes panting through the thickset  
grass ;



Then, stretched beneath a rick's shade in a ring,  
Their nooning take, while one begins to sing  
A stave that droops and dies 'neath the close sky of  
brass.

Meanwhile that devil-may-care, the bobolink,  
Remembering duty, in mid-quaver stops  
Just ere he sweeps o'er rapture's tremulous brink,  
And 'twixt the winrows most demurely drops,  
A decorous bird of business, who provides  
For his brown mate and fledglings six besides,  
And looks from right to left, a farmer 'mid his crops.

Another change subdues them in the Fall,  
But saddens not ; they still show merrier tints,  
Though sober russet seems to cover all ;  
When the first sunshine through their dew-drops  
glints,  
Look how the yellow clearness, streamed across,  
Redeems with rarer hues the season's loss,  
As Dawn's feet there had touched and left their rosy  
prints.

Or come when sunset gives its freshened zest,  
Lean o'er the bridge and let the ruddy thrill,  
While the shorn sun swells down the hazy west,  
Glow opposite ; — the marshes drink their fill  
And swoon with purple veins, then slowly fade  
Through pink to brown, as eastward moves the  
shade,  
Lengthening with stealthy creep, of Simond's darkening  
hill.

Later, and yet ere Winter wholly shuts,  
Ere through the first dry snow the runner grates,  
And the loath cart-wheel screams in slippery ruts,  
While firmer ice the eager boy awaits,  
Trying each buckle and strap beside the fire,  
And until bed-time plays with his desire,  
Twenty times putting on and off his new-bought skates ; —

Then, every morn, the river's banks shine bright  
With smooth plate-armor, treacherous and frail,  
By the frost's clinking hammers forged at night,  
'Gainst which the lances of the sun prevail,

Giving a pretty emblem of the day  
When guiltier arms in light shall melt away,  
And states shall move free-limbed, loosed from war's  
cramping mail.

And now those waterfalls the ebbing river  
Twice every day creates on either side  
Tinkle, as through their fresh-sparred grots they  
shiver  
In grass-arched channels to the sun denied ;  
High flaps in sparkling blue the far-heard crow,  
The silvered flats gleam frostily below,  
Suddenly drops the gull and breaks the glassy tide.

But, crowned in turn by vying seasons three,  
Their winter halo hath a fuller ring ;  
This glory seems to rest immovably, —  
The others were too fleet and vanishing ;  
When the hid tide is at its highest flow,  
O'er marsh and stream one breathless trance of  
snow  
With brooding fulness awes and hushes every thing.

The sunshine seems blown off by the bleak wind,  
As pale as formal candles lit by day ;  
Gropes to the sea the river dumb and blind ;  
The brown ricks, snow-thatched by the storm in  
    play,  
Show pearly breakers combing o'er their lee,  
White crests as of some just enchanted sea,  
Checked in their maddest leap and hanging poised mid-  
    way.

But when the eastern blow, with rain aslant,  
From mid-sea's prairies green and rolling plains  
Drives in his wallowing herds of billows gaunt,  
And the roused Charles remembers in his veins  
Old Ocean's blood and snaps his gyves of frost,  
That tyrannous silence on the shores is tost  
In dreary wreck, and crumbling desolation reigns.

Edgewise or flat, in Druid-like device,  
With leaden pools between or gullies bare,  
The blocks lie strewn, a bleak Stonehenge of ice ;  
No life, no sound, to break the grim despair,

Save sullen plunge, as through the sedges stiff  
Down crackles riverward some thaw-sapped cliff,  
Or when the close-wedged fields of ice crunch here and  
there.

But let me turn from fancy-pictured scenes  
To that whose pastoral calm before me lies :  
Here nothing harsh or rugged intervenes ;  
The early evening with her misty dyes  
Smooths off the ravelled edges of the nigh,  
Relieves the distant with her cooler sky,  
And tones the landscape down, and soothes the wearied  
eyes.

There gleams my native village, dear to me,  
Though higher change's waves each day are seen,  
Whelming fields famed in boyhood's history,  
Sanding with houses the diminished green ;  
There, in red brick, which softening time defies,  
Stand square and stiff the Muses' factories ; —  
How with my life knit up is every well-known scene !

Flow on, dear river ! not alone you flow  
To outward sight, and through your marshes wind ;  
Fed from the mystic springs of long-ago,  
Your twin flows silent through my world of mind :  
Grow dim, dear marshes, in the evening's gray !  
Before my inner sight ye stretch away,  
And will for ever, though these fleshly eyes grow  
blind.

Beyond that hillock's house-bespotted swell,  
Where Gothic chapels house the horse and chaise,  
Where quiet cits in Grecian temples dwell,  
Where Coptic tombs resound with prayer and praise,  
Where dust and mud the equal year divide,  
There gentle Allston lived, and wrought, and died,  
Transfiguring street and shop with his illumined gaze.

*Virgilium vidi tantum*, — I have seen  
But as a boy, who looks alike on all,  
That misty hair, that fine Undine-like mien,  
Tremulous as down to feeling's faintest call ; —

Ah, dear old homestead ! count it to thy fame  
That thither many times the Painter came ; —  
One elm yet bears his name, a feathery tree and  
tall.

Swiftly the present fades in memory's glow, —  
Our only sure possession is the past ;  
The village blacksmith died a month ago,  
And dim to me the forge's roaring blast ;  
Soon fire-new mediævals we shall see  
Oust the black smithy from its chestnut tree,  
And that hewn down, perhaps, the beehive green and  
vast.

How many times, prouder than king on throne,  
Loosed from the village school-dame's A-s and B-s,  
Panting have I the creaky bellows blown,  
And watched the pent volcano's red increase,  
Then paused to see the ponderous sledge, brought  
down  
By that hard arm voluminous and brown,  
From the white iron swarm its golden vanishing bees.

Dear native town ! whose choking elms each year  
With eddyng dust before their time turn gray,  
Pining for rain, — to me thy dust is dear ;  
It glorifies the eve of summer day,  
And when the westering sun half-sunken burns,  
The mote-thick air to deepest orange turns,  
The westward horseman rides through clouds of gold  
away,

So palpable, I 've seen those unshorn few,  
The six old willows at the causey's end,  
(Such trees Paul Potter never dreamed nor drew,)  
Through this dry mist their checkering shadows send,  
Striped, here and there, with many a long-drawn  
thread,  
Where streamed through leafy chinks the trem-  
bling red,  
Past which, in one bright trail, the hangbird's flashes  
blend.

Yes, dearer far thy dust than all that e'er,  
Beneath the awarded crown of victory,



Gilded the blown Olympic charioteer ;  
Though lightly prized the ribboned parchments three,  
Yet *collegisse jurat*, I am glad  
That here what colleging was mine I had, —  
It linked another tie, dear native town, with thee !

Nearer art thou than simply native earth,  
My dust with thine concedes a deeper tie ;  
A closer claim thy soil may well put forth,  
Something of kindred more than sympathy ;  
For in thy bounds I reverently laid away  
That blinding anguish of forsaken clay,  
That title I seemed to have in earth and sea and sky,

That portion of my life more choice to me  
(Though brief, yet in itself so round and whole)  
Than all the imperfect residue can be ; —  
The Artist saw his statue of the soul  
Was perfect ; so, with one regretful stroke,  
The earthen model into fragments broke,  
And without her the impoverished seasons roll.

## THE PIONEER.



WHAT man would live confined with brick and stone,  
Imprisoned from the influences of air,  
And cramped with selfish landmarks everywhere,  
When all before him stretches, furrowless and lone,  
The unmapped prairie none can fence or own?

What man would read and read the selfsame faces,  
And, like the marbles which the windmill grinds,  
Rub smooth for ever with the same smooth minds,  
This year retracing last year's, every year's, dull traces,  
When there are woods and un-man-stifled places?

What man o'er one old thought would pore and pore,  
Shut, like a book, between its covers thin  
For every fool to leave his dog's-ears in,  
When solitude is his, and God for evermore,  
Just for the opening of a paltry door?

What man would watch life's oozy element  
Creep Letheward for ever, when he might  
Down some great river drift beyond men's sight,  
To where the undethroned forest's royal tent  
Broods with its hush o'er half a continent?

What man with men would push and altercation,  
Piecing out crooked means for crooked ends,  
When he can have the skies and woods for friends,  
Snatch back the rudder of his undismantled fate,  
And in himself be ruler, church, and state?

Cast leaves and feathers rot in last year's nest,  
The winged brood, flown thence, new dwellings plan;  
The serf of his own Past is not a man;  
To change and change is life, to move and never rest;—  
Not what we are, but what we hope, is best.

The wild, free woods make no man halt or blind ;  
Cities rob men of eyes and hands and feet,  
Patching one whole of many incomplete ;  
The general preys upon the individual mind,  
And each alone is helpless as the wind.

Each man is some man's servant ; every soul  
Is by some other's presence quite discrowned ;  
Each owes the next through all the imperfect round,  
Yet not with mutual help ; each man is his own goal,  
And the whole earth must stop to pay his toll.

Here, life the undiminished man demands ;  
New faculties stretch out to meet new wants ;  
What Nature asks, that Nature also grants ;  
Here, man is lord, not drudge, of eyes and feet and hands,  
And to his life is knit with hourly bands.

Come out, then, from the old thoughts and old ways,  
Before you harden to a crystal cold  
Which the new life can shatter, but not mould ;  
Freedom for you still waits, still, looking backward, stays,  
But widens still the irretrievable space.

## LONGING.



OF all the myriad moods of mind  
That through the soul come thronging,  
Which one was e'er so dear, so kind,  
So beautiful, as Longing?  
The thing we long for, that we are  
For one transcendent moment,  
Before the Present poor and bare  
Can make its sneering comment.

Still, through our paltry stir and strife,  
Glows down the wished Ideal,  
And Longing moulds in clay what Life  
Carves in the marble Real;  
To let the new life in, we know,  
Desire must ope the portal; —

Perhaps the longing to be so  
Helps make the soul immortal.

Longing is God's fresh heavenward will  
With our poor earthward striving ;  
We quench it that we may be still  
Content with merely living ;  
But, would we learn that heart's full scope  
Which we are hourly wronging,  
Our lives must climb from hope to hope  
And realize our longing.

Ah ! let us hope that to our praise  
Good God not only reckons  
The moments when we tread his ways,  
But when the spirit beckons, —  
That some slight good is also wrought  
Beyond self-satisfaction,  
When we are simply good in thought,  
How'er we fail in action.

THE END.

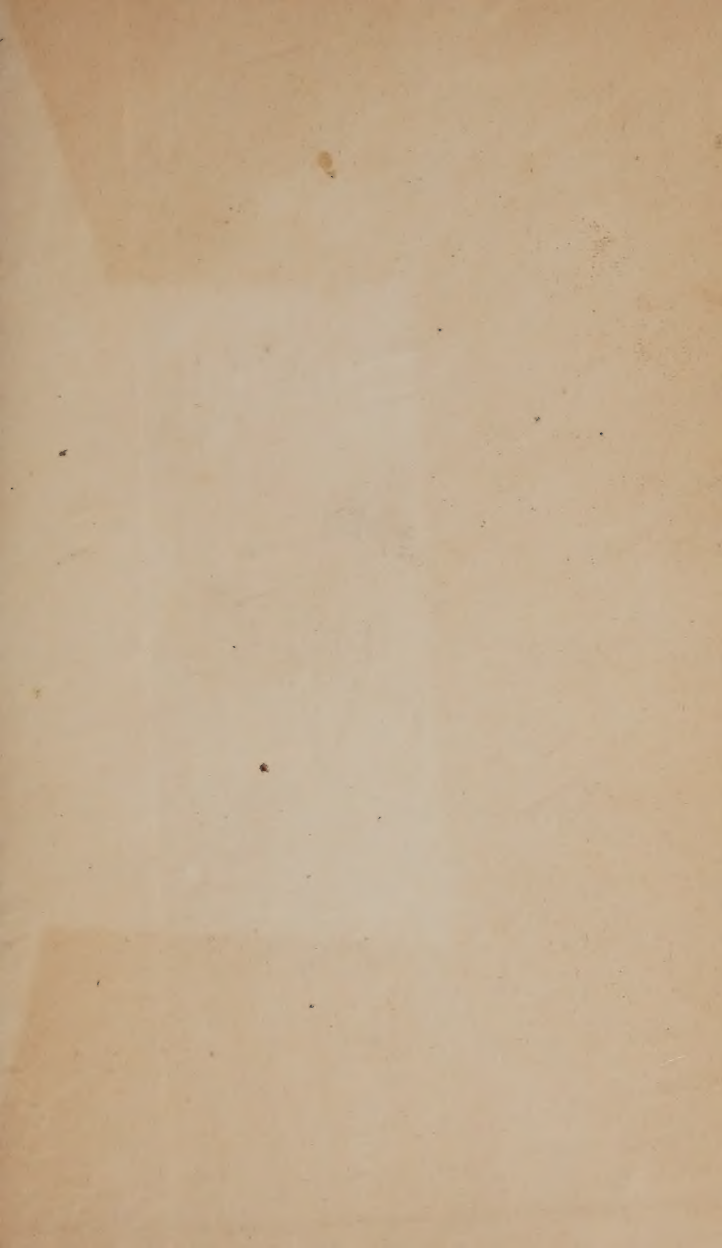














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